THE MIKADO ON THE SPOT *By Joseph Starobin*

NEW MASSES

FIFTEEN CENTS A COPY AUGUST 5, 1941

LONDON'S QUISLINGS

Claude Cockburn cables about the fight against the obstructionists

HOW GERMANY'S WORKERS FEEL

A letter from inside Hitler's Reich

THE ISSUES AT STAKE

A reply to some critics by the editors

HE SHOWED THE WAY

A. B. Magil discusses Earl Browder's anti-fascist writings

It Will Cost More If You Wait: Tips for Consumers by Paula Cox

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Between Ourselves

It's a rousing Soviet victory song that we print in this issue, and we hope that everybody will be joining in on the chorus. "If Tomorrow Brings War" is a favorite among the peoples of the USSR. It has all the splendid qualities which characterize the spirit with which the Red Army is beating back the Nazi invader—energy, confidence, heroism. You'll find it irresistible.

Even though we prefer to associate with cheerful people, especially on these hot midsummer days, we do like to maintain contact with one or two skeptical ones who lift their eyebrows whenever we announce a new scheme to raise money for the magazine, jack up the circulation, or annihilate the fascists. We find that an occasional I'm-from-Missouri friend is a good pepper-up. "What!" exclaims this inveterate grump. "You mean to say you *really* expect to raise a special cable fund? Not with the competition of the radio and the daily press." And that gets us all steamed up. So we go right out and raise a goodly sum although not all we had hoped for. And "What!" he comes right back. "Do you *really* expect to boost subs now? Not a chance in the summertime." So we cook up a new idea. Ten copies mailed, addressed, and wrapped for $1. And it works! Over four thousand new readers were brought to the magazine through this simple offer, which enables each reader to reach ten friends with NM for only $1. Thanks for the help, we say to our readers and to our little challenger. We are continuing this offer, by the way, and we hope to get 4,000 more new readers at the end of another brief period. Get behind our "Smash Fascism" subscription campaign.

The 1941 O'Brien collection of the best short stories cites two NM stories for distinguished writing. One is "Birthmark" by Ralph Ellison, and the other is "Tonight is Part of the Struggle" by Meridel LeSueur.

Mikhail Sholokhov's monumental novel, *The Silent Don,* will be published by A. A. Knopf on August 4. The completed work is in two volumes, *And Quiet Flows the Don* and *The Don Flows Home to the Sea.* By all odds the outstanding book of the year, *The Silent Don* will be discussed by Samuel Sillen in a specially prepared critical article, the first part of which is to appear in an early issue. Look for it.

Students from fourteen states, Mexico, and Canada have registered for the White Mountain Writers Conference which will be held at Jefferson, N. H., August 18 to September 2. Among NM contributors who will lecture and teach at this summer school are Marc Blitzstein, Rockwell Kent, Millen Brand, Benjamin Appel, Art Young, Wellington Roe, and Alfred Kreymborg. Open to all interested writers, the Conference is the newest of the writing schools to be established by the League of American Writers. Information may be obtained from the League at 381 Fourth Ave., New York City.

Not so long ago, we mentioned that Joy Davidman, NM movie critic, had pulled out of town for a vacation that would let her finish the novel she is now working on. But, to our surprise, the morning's mail brought in a batch of reviews from Maine, signed by Joy. She writes that it is all very well to sit about with nothing to do but write a novel, but after a while she sees a poster advertising the latest from Hollywood and like a fire-horse she's off to the local cinema to see what's up. So she sent in her sharp comments, which means that Alvah Bessie, who was pinch-hitting for her during these quiet days on Broadway, got a taste of vacation because he had less movies to see. The only confusing part of the whole business is that Alvah's most recent novel is already in the hands of the publisher, so what he did with his time is not known.

We have received a request from Alice Stone who is writing the biography of the great New York City unemployed leader, Helen Lynch. Miss Stone, 130 West 16th St., New York City, would appreciate copies of any letters to or from Helen Lynch, or for any documents relating to her or information which would help throw light upon Miss Lynch's work and personal life, character, or career.

The article on Negro fiction writers by Ralph Ellison is the second in the series on "The Negro in American Life." Herbert Aptheker, author of three books on the American Negro, is editing the series and arranging for contributions from leading writers on the subject. The series started last week with the article "The Myth of the Race," by the eminent world scientist, Prof. Franz Boas. In forthcoming issues, NM will present articles by Angelo Herndon, James W. Ford, Eugene C. Holmes, James S. Allen, Ben Davis, Jr., Elizabeth Lawson, Samuel Putnam, Herbert Aptheker, and Elie Siegmeister.

Who's Who

Claude Cockburn was editor of the internationally known newsletter, *The Week.* He was also Washington correspondent of the London *Times.* . . . Colonel T is the pseudonym of a former army officer, and writer on military subjects. . . . Paula Cox is a research worker on consumer problems. . . . Lucien Zacharoff, who has written for NM before, is an associate editor of Aircraft Publications, publishers of the authoritative yearbook, *Aerosphere.* He is the author of a book, *This is War!,* which devoted a good deal of space to problems of civilian defense against air raids. Mr. Zacharoff has contributed articles on worldwide aviation developments to numerous well known publications. . . . Ralph Ellison is a young Negro writer whose short stories, articles, and book reviews have frequently appeared in NM. . . . Millicent Lang is a graduate student specializing in contemporary literature.

Flashbacks

Though hobbling around on crutches with his leg broken and in a cast, IWW organizer Frank Little was active in a miners' strike in Butte, Mont., in 1917. At three o'clock on the morning of August 1, thugs entered his room in a Finnish rooming house, dragged him downstairs, and apparently fastened a rope around his neck and dragged him behind an automobile to a railroad bridge where he was hanged with a sign reading "3-7-77" around his neck. Other Butte labor leaders at this time received cards with this same sign, "3-7-77," which meant three feet wide, seven feet long, and seventy-seven inches deep—the regular size of a Montana grave. . . . Friedrich Engels died in London Aug. 5, 1895.

THIS WEEK

NEW MASSES, VOLUME XL, NO. 6

August 5, 1941

Two Fronts *A cable from Claude Cockburn and a letter from inside Hitler's Third Reich* 3
Earl Browder, People's Teacher *by A. B. Magil* 6
Gropper's Cartoon 9
The Mikado on the Spot *by Joseph Starobin* 10
It Will Cost More if You Wait *by Paula Cox* 11
The Issues at Stake *An editorial* 13
The "Porcupine" Pocket *by Colonel T.* 15
If Tomorrow Brings War *A song* 16
The USSR's Air Raid Defenses *by Lucien Zacharoff* . . 18
Editorial Comment 20

REVIEW AND COMMENT

Recent Negro Fiction *by Ralph Ellison* 22
Writers and the War *A statement by the League of American Writers* 23
Fable and Paradox *by Millicent Lang* 26
Brief Review 27

SIGHTS AND SOUNDS

The Movies: Stern, Gay, and Otherwise *by Alvah Bessie and Joy Davidman* 28
Whitman Cantata *by James Dugan* 29
Blow at Jim Crow *by Martin Mack* 30

Two weeks' notice is required for change of address. Notification sent to NEW MASSES rather than to the post office will give the best results.

Published weekly by Weekly Masses Co., Inc., at 461 Fourth Ave., New York City. Copyright 1941, Weekly Masses Co., Inc. Reg. U. S. Patent Office. Drawings and text may not be reprinted without permission. Entered as second-class matter, June 24, 1926, at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., under the act of March 3, 1879. Single copies 15 cents. Subscriptions $5.00 a year in U. S. and Colonies and Mexico. Six months $2.75; three months $1.50; Foreign $6.00 a year; six months $3.25; three months $1.75. In Canada, $5.50 a year, $3.00 for six months. Subscribers are notified that no change in address can be effected in less than two weeks. NEW MASSES welcomes the work of new writers and artists. Manuscripts and drawings must be accompanied by stamped, addressed envelopes. NEW MASSES does not pay for contributions.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

TWO FRONTS: A Cable from Britain and a Letter from Germany

Claude Cockburn describes London's mounting sentiment for an active Western Front. The Red Army and the story of a newsreel. . . . A German worker tells how he feels about the Soviet Union.

London (by cable).

STRANGE as it may seem to say so, I expect we shall find on looking back that the biggest event of last week on the all too quiet Western Front is the first showing throughout Britain of newsreels of the battling Red Army. First reports from the cinemas unanimously declare that the public enthusiasm evoked by scenes of the Red Army in action and the signing of the Anglo-Soviet pact, far surpassed anything seen among British movie audiences during the whole of this war. It isn't exaggeration to say that the real mobilization of opinion here in an entirely new spirit is beginning. And it is beginning at the movies. It is a mass development of something that was noticeable a week ago on "V-Campaign" day. Some publicists and others have sneered at the V campaign inside Britain. They ask what point it has when there is no risk involved in chalking up V signs here as there is in German-occupied territory. But I know very well, from my constant travels all over the country in trains jammed with troops and workers, that the campaign *does* have a point. And that is: for the first time—after so many blunders, so many retreats and defeats, so many causes for cynicism—the British people are beginning (only just beginning) to think once again in terms of hope and victory. They want to let everyone know about it. That is why trains are scrawled with V signs carved out by soldiers' knives. That is why the walls of factories are covered with them. It was three weeks or so before a realization of what the Soviet struggle means for Britain began really to seep in. And we would be kidding ourselves if we thought that it has fully seeped in yet. All the same I think that large sections of the people are beginning, in a manner of speaking, to run ahead of the government as a whole in their realization of immediate urgency, and of the immediate possibilities of the situation.

Following up the expressions of opinion I quoted last week, a few days ago there was an editorial in the *Daily Herald,* the organ of Transport House [headquarters of the Labor Party—ED.], which is not exactly noted for audacity. Says the *Herald:* "Too quiet on the Western Front? Many people think so. There is fast growing the feeling that we could do more to help our Soviet allies—and thus help ourselves—by badgering Germany from this side of Europe. If it be later found that precious opportunities have been missed through dilatoriness or lack of enterprise in the British military hierarchy, the British public will be furious. The *Daily Herald* does not advocate recklessness. It does not prescribe the course which additional action should take. It doesn't even assert that additional action is yet possible. But it informs the government of the people's state of mind on this matter." That, coming from the *Herald,* is saying quite a lot.

Of course it's no secret that what the *Herald* cautiously refers to as "additional action" is invasion of German-occupied Europe. That is what the people are talking about. Above all it is what the men in the army are talking about. Perhaps the best indication of the strength of this sentiment is that in the past few days there have appeared in the press, from sources presumably opposed to such action, quite detailed "arguments" designed to emphasize the difficulties—particularly the difficulties of finding adequate shipping space to supply adequate forces.

DESPITE CONSIDERATIONS of this kind, two facts remain. First, the rank and file of the British Army today possesses higher and tougher offensive spirit than it has ever had since the vast majority of its present members were the first called up. Second, this army—which is nothing if not outspoken, independent-minded, and critical—is now loudly asking just when it is going to get into action. Large numbers in the army are treating objections and hints of objections with some scorn. Soldiers are remarking that if the high command hasn't thought up some way of using effectively the enormous forces at Britain's disposal, it is just too bad about the high command. And right here is developing the following big—very big—new political factor which is going to have a most important influence on the course of British policy. After the very sharp public criticism which has greeted some of the recent performances by what the *Daily Herald* calls the "British military hierarchy," it would not have been surprising if some of its members might be somewhat inclined to feel that the safest way to avoid a kick in the pants is to keep your backside anchored to your armchair. Add to this fact that it would also not be surprising if that same "military hierarchy" included some pretty powerful elements who would quietly strangle themselves with their old school ties rather than turn their old school brains to assisting the USSR.

West End clubs are full of convincing and somewhat grim anecdotes regarding this sort of thing. Finally, add to that the existence of important and potentially influential anti-Soviet elements and you get the situation wherein vigorous forces in the government, who want to go fully ahead on lines laid down by Churchill in his promise of aid to the Soviet allies, need all the public backing they can get. That is especially so when it is realized, as it frankly must be, that full scale aid certainly cannot be given without this country taking some risks and making some sacrifices too. And the essential fact is that support for anyone who will take a really strong line—even a risky line—in lashing out at Hitler on a "second front" is piling up fast in this country. One may mention incidentally that political and material support in terms of guns, tanks, and planes could be piled up still more quickly if the process of removing obstructions to publication of the *Daily Worker* could be speeded up. In this connection it is worth remarking that I was recently informed by a very high official at a private dinner party that "we can't speed up the removal of the *Daily Worker* ban because it would frighten the Americans, make them think we are a bunch of Reds over here."

Despite all obstructions and delays—and the time factor makes any delay exceedingly dangerous in terms of loss of human life now and in the future—it is possible to see that the supporters of active anti-fascist policies are considerably more than holding their ground since the first great victory scored by Churchill's Aid-to-the-Soviet Union broadcast on June 22. Action against the Japanese is an obvious case in point, particularly because up to the last moment there seemed to be indications that appeasers were going to put up a really hot fight on the Japanese front. They are not routed there by any means, but they have had a nasty jolt. Regarding Spain, not as much can be said. Despite Franco's last speech, Foreign Minister Eden has only felt able to "warn" Franco. Yet the Franco government is actually sending troops (of a sort) to fight on the side of the Germans on the Eastern Front. And people are asking just how that squares with Churchill's solemn declaration that anyone who marches with the enemy—whether a government or an individual Quisling—is an enemy of Britain. In view of the situation in Asia Minor it is held in some well informed quarters here that the real test of the extent to which the government is able to take full drastic action, despite all appeasers, will come in its policy towards Turkey.

CLAUDE COCKBURN.

The following letter, written shortly before the outbreak of the Soviet-Nazi war, by a skilled German worker and anti-fascist, was sent to a "New Masses" reader who received it by a circuitous route. "New Masses" vouches for the letter's authenticity.—The Editors.

DEAR Friend: What is going on inside Germany? I don't believe anyone knows. Everyone knows a little, but no one knows the whole story. I know what is

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

going on in my neighborhood, in my shop, in the house where I live, but I could hardly tell you how things are in any other part of the city.

I feel weary, and that is the mood of all the people I meet. Weary of war, weary of work, weary of the thousand phrases we hear every day—weariness all over and a growing resentment inside. I work ten and often twelve hours a day. I hardly ever go anywhere. I'm so knocked out that I'd just like to sleep for a whole week and not have to work at that terrible speed. That's been going on for years, and ever since the beginning of the war it has become altogether unbearable. As you know, I am no longer a youngster and all these last years weigh two and three times as heavily. Emma has worked herself sick in a munition factory and she is now at home being taken care of by my mother. Else has grown up. She has been "mobilized" and is working on a farm. Her letters show that she isn't happy. My oldest has just recently become a soldier.

Will he have to go to war? Hitler has said that England will be finally defeated in 1941 and the war will be over. His predictions have hitherto generally been fulfilled; one victory after another, and although we have no exact information about our losses, they are in any case incomparably smaller than in two years of the previous war. With so many victories it is easy to believe in further victories. But what is remarkable about this is that today no one is really happy any more over the victories.

What interests the people about such a victory is the question: Will this victory bring peace?

When will England be attacked, when will our soldiers land on the British Isles? This is the subject of a lot of discussion. And despite all the great successes of our armies, it is my impression that the soldiers shrink from this attack. I have spoken with many soldiers on leave, soldiers who have fought in Poland, France, and Norway. But no one is very keen about taking a boat trip to England and landing there. "They'll make fish fodder out of us." That is the opinion of the soldiers. Our fleet hasn't got a chance against the English. The Americans have sent too many first class airplanes to England for us to be able to establish air superiority for such an attempted landing. Of course the soldiers will go when this attack is ordered. But I haven't met any one yet that has any confidence in such an attack.

HOW LONG will this war go on? That is the question that disturbs me and everyone else. We are defeating one country after another. But we haven't won yet. And it seems that the Americans are going to enter the war quite openly. That can be seen from the excitement of our newspapers. There is fear in that excitement. What America means we found out in the last war. We can't compete with the industrial productivity of the Americans. They can overtake us in arms production, because in our country the people are growing more and more tired and machines are being worn out.

"Our common foe is Hitler."

During recent weeks people are showing greater concern over whether our friendly relations with the Soviet Union will continue. Recently Hitler has taken steps which evoked protest from the Soviet Union: the march into Bulgaria and the attack against Yugoslavia. Many people shake their heads. There are so many expressions of worry as to the outcome. Many of my fellow workers have said to me that Hitler should never have started up with the Balkans, because that might bring us into conflict with the Soviet Union. Of course we also have certain very clever people. These say openly that Hitler will not stop until he has happily got us into war with the Soviet Union. And there are circles here that would rather see a war with the Soviet Union than with England. I don't exaggerate when I say that this would be a terrible surprise to us all. That would be the most unpopular kind of war. No matter what we have to go through and regardless of how often many of us fell into the trap of Nazi propaganda, no matter how often we have raised our arms in Hitler salute, and no matter how much may be incomprehensible to us—the Soviet Union is the land of socialism to millions of workers.

National-Socialist propaganda talks extensively and not without success, especially among the younger generation, about the plutocracy of England, about India, about English colonial policy, about the Versailles peace treaty and the whole national shame of the postwar years—but not one of these arguments can be used successfully for a war against the Soviet Union. All the anti-Bolshevik propaganda which had been built up against the Soviet Union before the outbreak of the war had to be destroyed by the Nazi propagandists themselves after the conclusion of the German-Soviet pact. They began to praise the Soviet Union, to emphasize its strength. They cited Bismarck as one who always wanted peace with Russia. They constantly emphasized that the Soviet Union was not responsible for the Versailles Peace Treaty. They criticized Kaiser Wilhelm for having waged war against Russia. They even praised the strength of the Red Army and the Red Air Fleet. The newspapers printed pictures of the leaders of the Soviet Union and the Red Army. And how many young Nazis who believe in Hitler's Socialist phrases have I heard say that it is only natural for a National Socialist Germany to cooperate with a Socialist Russia. Before the war anyone reported saying anything good about the Soviet Union landed in the hands of the Gestapo. Later the Soviet Union was praised for party purposes, and you can imagine how we chuckled and how we applauded such speeches at the meetings. I often felt myself back in the old days.

A few months ago at a meeting of my

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Unser Aller Feind ist Hitler."

shop an interesting incident occurred. The speaker explained the whole situation to us, told us why we must continue fighting, why we will beat England, and how the counter-blockade is more successful than the blockade. The audience remained silent; no enthusiasm could be worked up. And then he added: "Our good relations with Russia continue; we'll handle that matter later on when we've cleaned up England." Immediately there was great unrest in the audience. Several workers put questions to the speaker, of course, in the slave language that we are so adept at: "But the Fuehrer said that we want to live in permanent friendship with the Soviet Union; he signed a ten-year pact with the Soviet Union. The speaker's remarks contradict what the Fuehrer says." Stormy applause. The speaker stutters—he didn't mean it that way, he had been misunderstood, and what the Fuehrer says goes, and he quickly closed the meeting.

You can see from this what a difficult time Hitler would have should he attack the Soviet Union. We are forced to work like dogs for this war. And are we also to be forced to slave for war against the Soviet Union? I hope from the bottom of my heart that we will be spared this. At least, I spoke with many soldiers who came in contact with Red Army men during the war against Poland. They spoke of them with respect, and you know that the German soldier isn't so ready to pay respect to other soldiers, especially after the experiences of the past two years. The National Socialist-minded soldiers are not the last to praise the Fuehrer again and again for having spared us a clash with the Red Army.

What does the future have in store for us? No one knows, and a person has to be as young as Eric, my oldest, to swallow everything that is fed him. Maybe I am unjust to him but I often feel glad that he has become a soldier. You can't get far without experience. Let him experience it himself, let him learn at first hand the naked reality and compare it with what he has had drummed into him in the last few years. As a young man I myself went into the last war full of enthusiasm for the Kaiser and the Reich, but how changed I was when I returned. That's exactly what's going to happen to many young people today whom Nazi education has so affected that it is often impossible for us fathers to understand them. There are already many indications of this.

In my shop there are a number of skilled Czech workers. You would be pleased to see the comradely manner in which they are treated by the other workers. At first the Czech workers couldn't keep up with our speed, and we helped them whenever we could. Many of us feel as if we personally should apologize for the injustice done to their country. They are polite, reticent, and always very serious. They never laugh. It is not hard to guess their thoughts. They are waiting for our defeat and their freedom. Can anyone blame them for that? Wouldn't I do the same thing in their position? Many times I shudder when I see them in that light. That can't end well. We are holding all of Europe in our power, but they are all waiting for the time when they can jump at our throats and take vengeance. The world could not keep defeated Germany down permanently; who can believe that we can keep the world down permanently? What have we got to offer the people outside? Things are getting worse and worse for us here; how then will they get along? We have to bear a lot; but what can be done with them? I don't want to generalize, but believe me, I've seldom met anything among my fellow workers and acquaintances but sympathy for them out there.

So far our city has been only very slightly bombarded. But every time the British airmen fly over western Germany we also have a raid alarm. Then look at the frightened women and children in the air raid shelters and picture the suffering of those who are hit by *our* bombs. Sometimes people come from X, which is often bombarded, and tell horrible things about what's happened.

WHY ALL this insanity? Whom does it benefit? Who becomes happier? We and the rest of the world are becoming more and more wretched. If this lasts much longer Europe will be one vast heap of ruins. And always there is the tormenting question: What is the way out of this misery? I had the same thoughts as I sat in the trenches in 1917, and I couldn't imagine that all this would change, but it did change. And today I can hardly imagine that there will be peace again, that we will have a Germany in which human beings can live without being ordered around day and night. You remember the Whitsuntide excursion which we went on together to the Rudelsburg? I'll never forget your words: how beautiful Germany could be, and look what's become of it!

Our friends are scattered. Some are dead—earlier than they should have died. K. and H. are non-commissioned officers and are somewhere in France. They have grown older but they have remained the same. N. is working as a foreman in Hamburg. He is even more determined than he was before. R. is a big disappointment. He is now a well-paid bureaucrat and is doing everything to bury his past. I have heard nothing of the rest for a long time. Our circle of friends is scattered. Everyone depends upon himself. Everyone is looking for new friends. We hear nothing of one another, but we know there is someone everywhere.

Don't think that I've become an old crab. I hope for a reunion. I haven't forgotten what I learned. But everything is infinitely much more difficult than I had imagined. I have had to learn much anew, but I believe I have not learned in vain.

Your loyal friend,

X.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

EARL BROWDER, PEOPLE'S TEACHER

A. B. Magil reexamines the writings of the man who most vigorously led the fight against fascism. His imprisonment robs America of a great leader.

IT WAS a hot August night in 1936. Over the air on a coast-to-coast NBC hookup came a voice. It was not what would be called a good radio voice; it was a rather plain, garden-variety voice, with a prairie flatness in its tone. And perhaps there were those who tuned in that night who didn't pay much attention, who thought that some of the things said were a bit extreme. For that voice was saying on a hot August night five years ago:

> During the past few weeks we have seen the fascists of every country openly intervening on the side of the rebel insurrection against the democratically elected government of Spain. . . .
>
> How long will the peace-loving people of the world continue to let the war racketeers go unchallenged, terrorizing the weaker nations, and pursuing their policy of blackmail and robbery upon an international scale? How long will the American people, who have so convincingly shown their unmistakable desire for peace, continue to keep aloof from collective efforts for peace which alone can check the war plans of the Japanese militarists in the Far East and of their ally, Hitler, in Europe?
>
> The drums of war are beating ever more loudly. Unless the peace forces of the world marshal their strength and build an unbreakable wall of resistance against the fascist warmakers, death and barbarism will soon ride the heavens as the fascists rain destruction from their fleets of bombing planes, equipped with every conceivable device for mass destruction and murder.

Who today will say that those words were extreme? Not the people of London. Nor the people of Warsaw or Paris or Chungking or any land that has known the agony of fascist invasion. Millions have felt on their own flesh the terrible consequences of the failure to "build an unbreakable wall of resistance against the fascist war-makers." And who in America would deny the truth of that warning issued five years ago? But a strange thing has happened. The man who spoke those words has been silenced, branded a criminal, jailed. Earl Browder, general secretary of the Communist Party, is today where the anti-fascist leaders of Germany are, with the difference that his prison cell is in the USA, in Fuehrer Talmadge's Atlanta, Ga. The thing seems preposterous, and it is; worse: a crime against America in this time of utmost peril. Here is a contradiction as monstrous as that which prevented our own government from heeding Browder's words while there was yet time —as monstrous and menacing as that which has caused the State Department to appease Japan and Vichy and Franco Spain. There are no such contradictions in fascist policy. Imagine Hitler imprisoning an enemy of democracy! On the contrary, enemies of democracy occupy the highest posts in the Third Reich. But our government imprisons for four years this outstanding fighter against fascism, the man who before anyone else sounded the alarm and sought to save our country and the world from the disasters of these tragic years.

Recently I have been rereading the articles and speeches of Earl Browder, collected in a number of books issued by International Publishers. Those who have had the opportunity of watching Browder work know his extraordinary ability to drive to the core of every problem and to see it in its broadest relationship to the totality of problems that face mankind. Out of his books of the last half dozen years shine so many of his qualities: his unquenchable anti-fascism, his creative insight, his devotion to the people, his talent for the pungent phrase, his grasp in every situation of the essentials required to move forward toward a given goal. One is struck too, on reading Browder's work, with the basic continuity of Communist principles through all the changing tactics necessitated by a shifting world situation.

I CHOSE the above quotation from Browder's radio speech of Aug. 28, 1936, included in the volume, *The People's Front,* not because it was exceptional, but, on the contrary, because it was so typical. That speech was made during an election campaign which the Communist Party alone among political parties waged around the issue of democracy versus fascism. Only today can we fully appreciate the rightness of making that the principal issue. Earlier in the year it was Browder who raised the slogan: "Keep America out of war by keeping war out of the world." That slogan caught on; it epitomized an entire program, an entire stage of the fight for peace; and in one form or another it became the watchword of the forces working for collective action to prevent war. Read Browder's earlier book, *What Is Communism?,* written in 1935, and you will find the same thought there. Up until the outbreak of the second imperialist conflict Browder kept hammering away at this central idea: peace and democracy are threatened by the fascist dictatorships and by the pro-fascist reactionaries in every capitalist country; unity of the people and the creation of an international front of peoples and governments alone can avert catastrophe. Who today will say that he was wrong?

UNFORTUNATELY, it was during this period that the Roosevelt administration, under reactionary pressure, turned its back on collective efforts to end fascist brigandage when it passed a so-called neutrality law which actually penalized the victims of aggression. And at a time when Browder was calling for all aid to the Spanish people, warning that "The international fascist intervention in Spain is the first point of the general world war being prepared by fascism against democracy everywhere," the administration followed Chamberlain in aiding Hitler and Mussolini with an arms embargo against Spain. Repeatedly Browder denounced the folly of such a policy. His words ring today with the accents of prophecy. "We must use every event in the international field," he told the meeting of the Communist national committee on June 17, 1937, "especially the fascist invasion of Spain and the Japanese intervention in the Far East, for proving the true nature of the neutrality policy as an aid to fascism, as leading to war, as driving America with the whole world toward a new world war." Tirelessly he pointed the way to national and international security:

> America must be kept out of war in the only possible way, by America helping all peace-loving peoples to defeat the fascist attempts to spread war throughout the world. . . . If we threw our moral and economic power into the scales definitely against the fascist war-makers and in favor of peace, together with France [then under a People's Front government—A.B.M.], China, and the Soviet Union, we would rally the enthusiastic support of the people of Britain and its Dominions, we would rally even the people of Germany, Italy, and Japan who, knowing they had powerful and determined friends, would rise up and throw off their bloody dictators. (*The People's Front,* p. 243.)

History has proved how correct was Browder's estimate of America's decisive role when he told the tenth national convention of the Communist Party in May 1938: "It is doubtful that world war can be avoided, that its fires can be fully extinguished in Spain and China and Ethiopia, that world peace can be maintained without the effective participation of our own country in performing that task [the creation of an international peace front], a common task of all progressive, democratic, and peace-seeking peoples."

It was not till October 1937 that President Roosevelt made his first appeal for collective action in his famous "quarantine the aggressors" speech. But that policy was never implemented; the embargo against Spain was not lifted, the initiative which Browder and

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the Communist Party urged upon our government was not taken.

Came the climactic days leading up (or shall we say, descending down) to Munich and the feverish months beyond—the period that finally exploded in World War II. Reread the record of that time in Browder's book, *Fighting for Peace,* and in the first part of his *The Second Imperialist War,* and ask how different things would be today if the policy he advocated had been adopted. Recall that melodramatic scene when Chamberlain suddenly announced before a hushed House that he had been invited to confer with Hitler at Berchtesgaden. Recall the flights to Berchtesgaden and Munich. Now it is fashionable to speak with contempt of Munich and Chamberlain; the word "appeasement" has become an outcast from polite society. But think back to those days. Did not the bourgeois world unanimously support Chamberlain's pilgrimage and the treacherous Munich pact? Did not the Labor members of Parliament cheer, did not the French Socialist deputies vote their approval, did not Norman Thomas speak of Chamberlain's "wise and brave move"? Only the Communists among the political parties in every country denounced Munich and the murder of Czechoslovakia. They did not wait for the coroner's verdict; they knew death even when it masqueraded as life, they fought war even when it put on the visage of "peace." What a contrast to the comments of other political leaders were the words of Earl Browder on the occasion of Chamberlain's first trip to Berchtesgaden:

> The Chamberlain policy is finally bankrupt; it is no longer possible to purchase a false and hypocritical peace by throwing the weaker nations one after another to the fascist wolves. If Chamberlain is going to Hitler to deliver to him the defenses of the Czechoslovakian republic, through the transparent hypocrisy of "plebiscite," then it only means that Chamberlain's government has decided to go down in the crash of European and world peace. That way lies certain universal slaughter. (*Fighting for Peace,* p. 140.)

And how tragically prophetic were Browder's words after the Munich deal:

> It [the pact] opened the flood-gates of reaction over Europe. It placed the fascist noose around the neck of the French people. It strengthened the arrogant Japanese aggression in the Far East. It threatens new blows against the heroic Spanish people. It restored the shaking power of Hitler and Mussolini over their own enslaved peoples. It delivered a shattering blow at the remaining fabric of world peace. It threatens the encirclement of the United States, while it works to undermine our remaining democracy from within. (*Fighting for Peace,* p. 180.)

Here we should recall what certain anti-Communists are pleased to ignore: that the policy of collective security which Browder and the Communists urged was a *peace policy.* It was designed not to organize war, but to prevent it. There is absolutely no ambiguity on that score in Browder's writ-

"Witch-Hunt" by William Steig from "Winter Soldiers"

ings. There were some, on the other hand, both in Washington and elsewhere, who conceived of collective security as a means of waging imperialist war against their German and Italian rivals. That is why they made only half-hearted efforts toward concerted action while peace could still be saved, but became very energetic in aligning this country with the British and French imperialists once war came as a consequence of fascist aggression and "democratic" sabotage of the peace front. In the pre-war days it was not always easy to distinguish between these two conceptions of collective security since those who were calculating on war gave frequent lip-service to the idea of peace. The distinction is important, however, for it helps us to understand the essential consistency of the Communist attitude before and after the outbreak of war. As Browder wrote in the April 5, 1938, issue of NEW MASSES:

> The policy of concerted action for peace is not a short-time or emergency policy merely; it is valid for a whole period, and for all circumstances of that period, whether in the fight to prevent war or the fight to end a war already under way. The immediate practical aspects of such a policy may change from time to time, as some forces swing over from one side to the other, and as war is broadened or narrowed, but the essence of the policy is valid so long as war is the main danger to the world.

Thus it was not the Communists who abandoned the policy of collective efforts for peace when the war began. Necessarily this policy had to assume different forms in the radically changed world situation, but its fundamental character remained. It should be remembered that the Communists never predicated this policy merely on action by governments, but also and primarily on action by the *peoples.* In the new situation that arose, the Communists and other progressives sought to unite the efforts of the peoples of all countries together with those of the one government that continued to stand for peace, the USSR, in order to frustrate the fascists and imperialists on both sides and secure a truly democratic peace. This was a new phase of collective security. It is curious that many of those who previously had denounced this peace policy as "war-mongering," now just as readily branded it "appeasement." And that shameful bastard word, "Communazi," invented by a well-known boudoir journalist, was used to smear the only party that had opposed the Munich betrayal, that had

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

consistently urged an international peace front to block fascist aggression, that in the very bowels of Nazi Germany was continuing to fight Adolph Hitler and all his works.

A basic and continuous element of the foreign policy which Browder and the Communists have advocated has been collaboration with the only non-imperialist great power, the Soviet Union. In the speech in which he predicted the fatal consequences of the Munich pact, Browder declared of Chamberlain and Daladier: "They preferred to betray peace and democracy, rather than preserve it in cooperation with the Soviet Union. They betrayed the national interests of their own lands, rather than protect these interests in an international peace front that included the Soviet Union." (*Fighting for Peace,* p. 181.) Repeatedly he urged that, despite this sabotage, it was still possible to save world peace if the United States took the initiative together with the USSR. "Today, as never before," he told the meeting of the Communist national committee in December 1938, "the fate of the world depends upon the role that will be played by these two greatest powers in the world; more than ever, this *depends upon the collaboration of these two powers for their common aims.*" (*Fighting for Peace,* p. 203.) And on various occasions he emphasized that collaboration with the USSR was in the national interest of the United States.

In this respect too the Roosevelt administration was disposed to drift along with Chamberlain, until finally the storm burst upon the world. Overnight the old alignments lost their meaning and relationships were transformed. Both the fascist dictatorships and the governments which had refused to create a peace front were now involved in military conflict for imperialist advantage. The fact that one side in this conflict proved better prepared and won spectacular victories did not alter the war's basic social and political character. Now the task of anti-fascists in all countries was to fight for peace—a democratic peace—in a new way, in opposition to the governments on both sides, in opposition to the fascism of Germany, Italy, and Japan, and also to the fast developing fascism of Paris, London's "City," and Wall Street. Only the position of the Soviet Union remained fundamentally unchanged, though its peace policy necessarily had to seek new forms. It was therefore still possible for the United States to end its collaboration with the British and French reactionaries which had proved so fatal to world peace, and instead to align itself with the USSR in order to secure the defeat of fascism and imperialism and the establishment of a people's peace.

> America has a tremendous potential influence in world affairs [said Browder two months after the start of the war], which, if consistently applied to bring this war to an end, in cooperation with other nations that also want peace, especially the Soviet Union, could force the cessation of hostilities, could lay the foundations for a peace that would be neither a Munich nor a Versailles. But this great role, which would fulfill the aspirations of the working people of America, is being sidetracked, sabotaged, and abandoned by the American capitalists and the politicians who take their orders, because it does not fit into their greed to coin huge profits from the war. (*The Second Imperialist War,* pp. 154-155.)

At the time those words were spoken, France, Belgium, Holland, Norway, Denmark, Luxembourg, Rumania, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Greece, and Finland were still independent states, and the Nazis had been barred from seizing the whole of Poland by the action of the Red Army in liberating the western Ukraine and western Byelo-Russia. How much could the United States, acting with the Soviet Union and supported by the peoples of all countries, have accomplished at that time! But our government, as is known, pursued a different path; it not merely failed to seek Soviet friendship, but adopted an attitude of active hostility and sanctions against the one great neutral in the world. The Communists and other progressives did not, however, cease their efforts to alter Washington's policy. In a speech during the election campaign, on Oct. 6, 1940, Browder delineated this alternative path for America in striking words:

> A clear-sighted and long-range foreign policy for the United States can only be developed upon the solid foundation of friendship and collaboration between our country, China, and the Soviet Union. That is now blocked by our shameful betrayal of China, through our supply to Japan over the years of the materials for her war of conquest, and by Washington's studied and artificial hostility toward the Soviet Union. Only when these features of our present foreign policy are wiped out can we begin to move toward a foreign policy which can guarantee peace and security to America.
>
> Such a constellation of powers, the United States, China, and the Soviet Union, moving along agreed-upon lines fully consistent with the needs of the three great peoples, would be very powerful indeed. It would be a stable combination, for these countries have no rivalries or conflicting interests. It would be strategically powerful because it would immediately hold the keys to three continents. . . . It would be physically strong, combining seven hundred to eight hundred millions of population, and the preponderance of the world's productive forces. It would be morally invincible, attracting the enthusiastic adherence of the suffering peoples all over the globe. (*The Way Out,* pp. 111-112.)

And for those who today may have qualms about collaborating with imperialist governments against Hitlerism, it might be useful to cite what Browder wrote in an article "On Some Aspects of Foreign Policy":

> Does this mean that the United States government must inevitably, as long as it remains an imperialist, capitalist government, further follow up its hostile attitude toward the Soviet Union? Not necessarily, for even Nazi Germany found it advisable to replace its hostility with a formally correct attitude toward the Soviet Union. At least as much may be demanded and gained from the government of the United States by an informed and alert working class. (*The Way Out,* pp. 116-117.)

Not only did our government, under the influence of reactionary business circles, refuse to adopt this common-sense proposal, but it decided to silence the foremost advocate of that course. For opposing an imperialist foreign policy and urging one that was genuinely democratic and anti-fascist, Earl Browder was imprisoned for four years. That the jailing of Browder on a trumped-up technical charge was actually political was conceded even by Wendell Willkie—for reasons of his own—in an article in the *New Republic* of May 18, 1940.

But the words and deeds of the man from Kansas have proved more powerful than the hypocrisies and evasions of the dreamers of empire. Today our government has taken the first steps toward collaboration with the USSR, while Britain has formed an alliance with the world's only socialist republic. Munich is in the process of being avenged. And down in Atlanta there must be joy in the heart of the man who more than anyone fought against Munich, fought for precisely such a development of American foreign policy—though there must also be grief because the Soviet land has been attacked, because much that was built at great sacrifice is now being wantonly destroyed by the invader. It is tragic that collaboration did not come when it could have prevented or halted the war, when it could have saved the lives and homes and liberties of millions in Europe and Asia. Yet it has not come too late to rescue mankind from even greater tragedy in the future. Today peace and security for America can be achieved only through the military defeat of Hitlerism and its allies. We have begun to move upon the road to that end—the road of all-out aid to Britain, the Soviet Union, and China.

I recall one of the last times I saw Browder—the mass meeting that celebrated the thirtieth anniversary of NEW MASSES. I recall that intense, hunched figure and the words that seemed to be made out of the building-blocks of history.

> We, though small in numbers today—and the future always first presents itself not with the majority but with a small minority—we represent the future of America. We represent the American search for truth; we represent the American tradition of democracy, of government of, by, and for the people. We represent honest thought and culture; we represent the search for beauty; we represent the creative power of the masses. And that is why the future belongs to us.

America needs that kind of vision today. Tom Paine and John Brown had it in their own time. And America needs the leadership of Earl Browder. One does not have to agree with Communism to believe that; one has only to be an intelligent, small-"d" democrat. Our fight against fascism is weaker without Browder, the victory less certain. How long will we tolerate the shame and stupidity of his imprisonment?

A. B. MAGIL.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE MIKADO ON THE SPOT

Joseph Starobin discusses Washington's reactions to Tokyo's new act of aggression. Lessons which should have been learned sooner. Frustrating Japan by giving full aid to China.

WASHINGTON'S reaction to the Japanese occupation of southern Indo-China was prompt and sharp. It was regrettable only that it came so very late in the Far Eastern crisis. There is no doubt any longer, in the minds of millions of people, to what a horrible degree Japan has been relying on the United States in the past four years: the newspapers are full of the cruel percentages, the figures for pig iron and copper and oil which have meant money for American big business but death for the men, women, and children of China. At Hyde Park last weekend, the President admitted that the United States was selling oil to Japan because her militarists were blackmailing us by the threat of spreading the war; he admitted it was a "selfish" policy, too. But what he did not admit—the crucial point—is that his policy in the Far East has not spared us the spread of the war at all. On the contrary, it was most significant that in the same day that he ordered the freezing of Japanese credits and the licensing of our exports to Japan, the President was compelled to place the Philippines on a war footing. Thus the case against appeasement is ironically proven, in the Far East as in Europe. Whereas Pacific history might have been changed had the President deprived Japan of her reliance on the United States four years ago, now we are confronted by the default of our policy, with the prospect of fighting Japan four years later.

It is significant also that the United States was joined by Canada, the Dutch East Indies, and Great Britain. Here too is the obvious moral. It was only two years ago that Sir Robert Craigie, the British ambassador in Tokyo, signed the infamous agreement which recognized Japan's special privileges in China—the Craigie-Arita formula. That was on July 22, 1939, and four days later the United States was compelled—on its own—to abrogate the trade agreement with Japan. How different things might have been if the Western powers had achieved that unity which hard necessity taught them two years later.

The Philippine mobilization is therefore an index of how ignominiously appeasement has failed. It is also a sign of how really critical things have become in the Far East. The President was not merely trying to heighten the sense of national emergency. A glance at the map will show the hard strategic background of the move. The Philippines are much further to the south than most people realize. By taking over French naval bases such as Cam-Ranh, and pouring its troops to the very tip of Cochin-China, Japan is now in a position to intersect American naval communications with British Malaya and the Dutch East Indies. She is in a position to dominate Siam, which lies between Indo-China and British Burma; her battleships lie across the routes from Shanghai and Manila to Singapore. The latest occupation is not just another step in the expropriation of France's colonial empire: it really gives Japan a strong strategic position in the face of either a physical showdown or continued diplomatic intrigue.

IT IS OF PARTICULAR INTEREST that when the economic measures were first announced, Dean Acheson of the Treasury Department vigorously denied that they constituted an embargo. Just why Mr. Acheson seems to oppose an embargo is not clear, but he was not merely insisting on a fine point. *There still is no full embargo on trade with Japan.* What has happened is this: Japanese merchants can no longer sell their wares over here, and American business men can no longer ship their goods over there *without the permission of the State Department.* Trade has therefore become an open instrument of governmental policy. I am not denying the real value of this action. Even if they have considerable stores of oil, and even if they continue to expand their trade with the Latin American countries (which Washington will find it difficult to stop) it is still true that the Japanese have been seriously damaged. But the important point is that the State Department will now be able to ratify all shipments of supplies to Japan or the entrance of Japanese goods in our markets, much in the same way as the State Department has been ratifying and even encouraging trade with France and with Spain. In other words, the anonymous Cagoulards in that sprawling old quarry known as the State Department Building now have a sharper method of bargaining, the purpose of which is to persuade the Japanese that their trade can continue if only they are more respectful of the aims of American policy.

Such pressure might not in itself be reprehensible if only the aims of American policy in the Far East were clear and well defined. That is where the real difficulty lies. Undoubtedly, there are some too-clever-by-half gentlemen in Washington who reckon that their strong stand last week might still force the Japanese Cabinet to turn northward, to attack Siberia after having digested Indo-China.

That the Japanese Foreign Office would certainly be committing *harakiri* by launching its eleven divisions against the fifty-two divisions of the Soviet Far Eastern forces sounds logical. It sounds logical also that after their experiences in the summers of 1938 and 1939, the Japanese Army might not be hankering for another chance at the Soviets quite so soon. Yet politics is not a matter of pure logic. It is quite possible that Foreign Minister Matsuoka was dropped out of the Japanese Cabinet not only because he had committed the Japanese to war on Hitler's side, which they do not want at the moment, but also because he had signed the pact of neutrality and friendship with the USSR—an obstacle in the path of some of the more bloodthirsty elements in Japan. If there is any basis at all in the United Press report on July 28 that the Chinese Communist Party has issued a manifesto urging a military alignment of China and the Soviet Union in case of a Japanese attack, then the possibility of a Japanese attack on the Soviets is not out of the question.

Yet where would such a development place the Western powers? Britain might consider herself relieved of an immediate threat in the South Pacific, but only at the expense of aiding Hitler's ally—in other words, adding strength to the Hitlerite cause which Britain is pledged to fight alongside the Soviets. And what about the United States? It would place us in exactly the same danger as we are now faced with by the Nazi assault on the USSR, namely, the danger of being outflanked and encircled by a world fascist coalition. In fact, the traditional American policy has been to support Russia—either czarist or Soviet—in preventing the Japanese entrenchment on the Siberian mainland. Even General Graves' expedition in 1918 was directed only in part to the suppression of the Soviets in Siberia—it was directed equally at the possibility that the Japanese would entrench themselves permanently on the mainland. Obviously, therefore, if anybody in Washington thinks that a Japanese attack on Siberia would be a lesser danger to us than an attack on the Malaya, or the East Indies, these are morbid, fantastic, self-injurious speculations, directly inimical to our best and traditional interests.

American policy still needs the most urgent definition with reference to China. If we are interested in China's unconditional victory, then it is not enough to freeze Japanese funds, or even to place the Philippines on a war footing, however necessary. Nor is it most important that we set aside stabilization funds for China: what is more urgent than ever is *political support for the unity of the Chinese people, interlinked with large-scale economic and technical assistance so that the united Chinese armies can undertake an offensive against Japan in the field.* We must match the aid which the Soviets are giving to China, and throw our good offices on the side of China's unity of action. That is the shortest route toward the frustration of Japanese aggression. Next to direct action in the Atlantic, it is the shortest route toward the defeat of the Axis, of which Japan is still the Far Eastern member.

JOSEPH STAROBIN.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

IT WILL COST MORE IF YOU WAIT

Prices up and quality down. Tips for consumers who are buying anything from pants to pots. The monopolists put the squeeze on small manufacturers and retailers.

THERE'S a boom on, but whose boom is it? Certainly not plain John Smith's. Evidence: the state of his trousers. They're wearing through at the knees and seat, and no second pair hangs in his closet. That great American institution, the two-pants suit, is vanishing. John Smith bought a suit for the same price this year as last, but the material wasn't up to old standards and the extra pants were missing. Soon, much sooner than in the past, he'll need another suit. "Concealed value readjustment to overcome shopper resistance"—that's the way business explains the inferior, one-trouser garment on the "boom time" market.

If John Smith needs dungarees or overalls, he'll not even get them at the old price. The tag will show a higher figure than in pre-emergency days. One washing will bring out the hidden "value readjustment"; work clothes are made of non-preshrunk materials with skimpier seams and cheaper dyes.

As for what's in the pockets—the pay envelope may appear the same, but in effect it has contracted. Money, as Mrs. Smith well knows, buys less of every household and personal need than a year ago. Yet summer retail prices, high as they may seem, are far below predicted prices for the coming fall. By then, the increase in prices paid to producers for basic materials will be passed on down to manufacturers, to stores, and ultimately will fall on the consumer with full force. Quality depreciation will be another, more subtle means of price-boosting.

The Smiths—you and I—can somewhat ease the strain on our pocketbooks by wise shopping now. From various sources, such as Consumers Union, I have compiled a list of things to be bought now while old stocks are still available (at this writing) at close-to-former prices:

Men's Suits: Men's clothing will advance twenty percent. Already suits which were $25 are on the $30 racks, while those marked $25 are made of poorer materials. The thirty percent to forty percent rise in woolen goods on the wholesale market will send retail prices up even more steeply in a few months.

Men's Shirts: Some $1.35, $1.65, and $2 shirts, unchanged in price, have been shown by test to be of cheaper material, with a lower thread count than before. Shirts retailing for $2 are going up to $2.50 and those in lower brackets will be moved forward accordingly.

Work Clothes: Overalls are sold for fourteen percent more than previously. Mill finishes of materials will replace preshrunk fabrics. Jean shirts that sold for less than $1 are going up to $1.50. Changes in construction at vulnerable points and lack of ample pockets will lessen usefulness.

Shoes: After price advances of fifteen to twenty-five percent were predicted, OPACS, the government price control agency, set a ceiling on prices of hides. But manufacturers with "too much fall business already under their belts," as *Women's Wear Daily* commented, continued to lift shoe prices. Incidentally, army orders for shoes this year total less than seven percent of production.

Rayon Products: Rayon fabrics have soared ten to twenty percent in a year. Structural cheapening of underwear, neckties, and rayon dresses is under way. Rayon is being used as a substitute for other yarns in wool.

Bathrobes: Flannel robes that sold last year at $5.95 will be $7.95 this fall. Chenille robes also are on the upgrade.

Sheets, Towels, Handkerchiefs: Poor construction of sheets and pillowcases may be detected in excess sizing which powders out if rubbed. Unbranded muslin sheets are sold for about twenty-two percent more than formerly; one chain offers onetime sixty-seven-cent sheets at eighty-four cents. Bath towels will be restyled or cut in smaller sizes. The cheapest linen hand-rolled men's handkerchiefs were fifty cents each by early summer. By fall, cotton piece goods will have advanced an estimated sixty-five to seventy-five percent in a year. Stock up on all cotton staples.

Blankets: Already eight percent higher than last year, although not yet reflecting the full lift in prices of materials.

Watches and Clocks: The $1 range may be discontinued; wholesale prices of somewhat higher quality pieces are on the way up.

Scissors, Cutlery, Silverware: Scissors and shears will soon reflect the already higher wholesale price; silverware wholesale prices are up five to ten percent. Household cutlery manufacturers claim some mills won't accept any more orders for stainless steel; substitutes for brass and nickel-silver for rivets are being sought; buy kitchen knives now.

Kitchenware: Aluminumware soon will be unobtainable. A leading refrigerator manufacturer has begun installing boxes with only one ice tray and no door separating the ice compartment; promises refills of aluminum parts "in one year, maybe two." Enamelware costs five to ten percent more; castiron ware, wholesale, is up ten percent.

Stoves and Ranges: New prices are ten percent higher; a major shortage is predicted in the fall.

Coated Table Coverings: Only old stocks of Koroseal (superior to oilcloth) are available, the present output now going into military products; pyroxylin also is advancing.

Floor coverings: Some cotton rugs already are up ten percent—far sharper increases by fall are predicted. Broadloom wool pile rugs are costlier and soon will contain more rayon than before. Linoleum probably will be made of substitutes for cork and burlap; one such "linoleum" is on the market. Prices of old stocks have risen.

Canned Goods: Wholesale prices are leaping, with canners refusing to expand supply.

Sewing Machines: One manufacturer has hiked the wholesale price five to seven percent—a considerable amount for such an expensive item.

Radio Sets: Production to be cut at least twenty-five percent this year. An adequate substitute for aluminum in condensers has not been found.

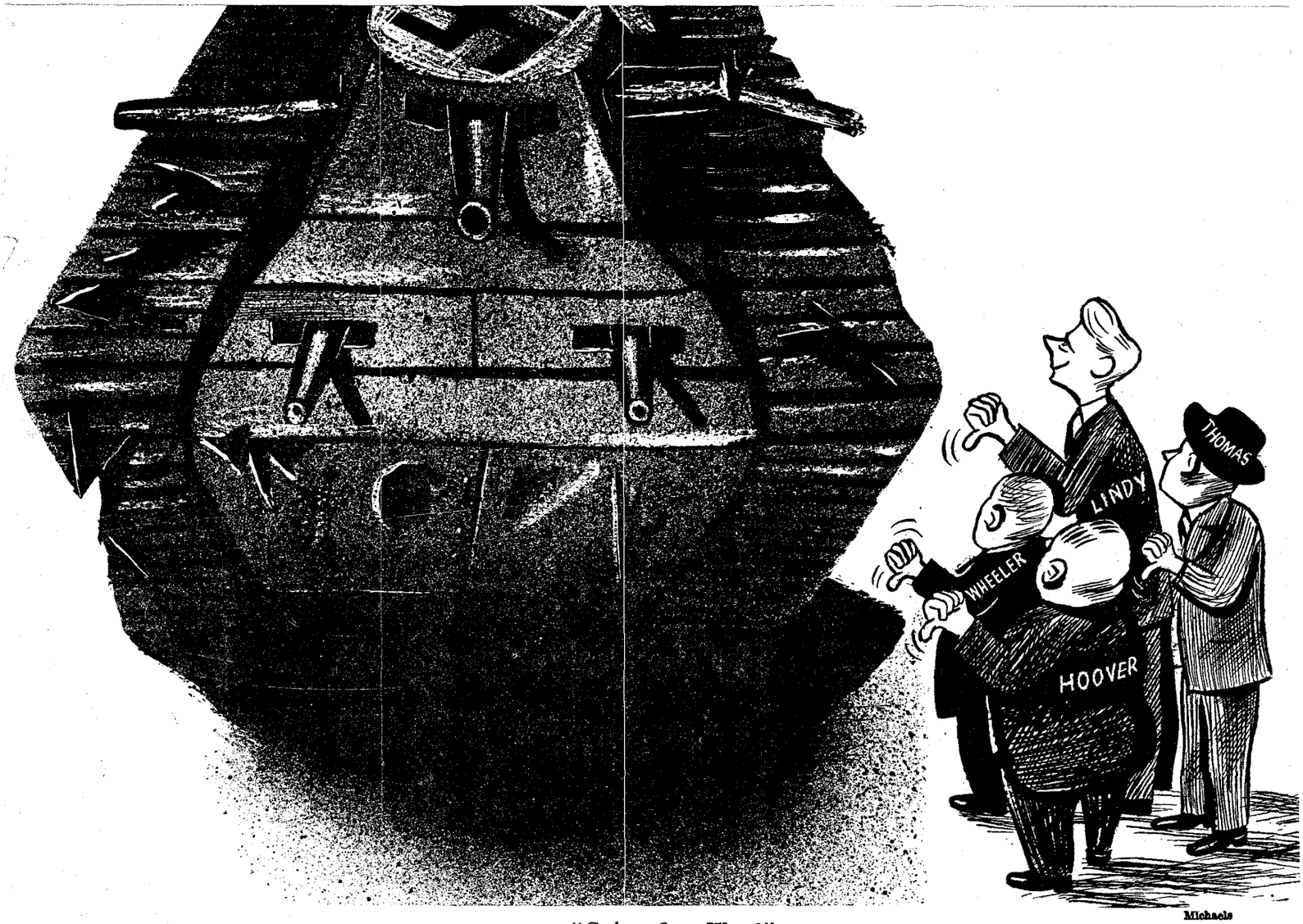
Auto Tires: Cost of rubber and textiles used to reinforce tires is growing. Tires, purchased now, may be kept several years, well-wrapped, without deterioration.

Among the "dont's" advised by Consumers Union are these: Avoid buying new models of major gas and electric household appliances because the substitution of plastics, glass, and enamelware for aluminum parts is still in a stage of experimentation. Before buying any new electrical gadgets, find out if a power shortage is expected in your locality. Do *not* buy on the installment plan; rather, obtain an outright loan from a bank or cooperative credit union. Credit terms have been unreasonably stiffened by big retailers and commercial credit agencies.

The shopping advice is sound, but at best it cannot stretch John Smith's weekly wages to cover his family's needs. "Boom time" is all for the monopolists, who control the production and distribution of essential goods. Using the war as a pretext, monopolies have extended their old gluttonous practices to creating artificial shortages in metals and textiles, food and fuel, wood, leather, paper, chemicals. Various methods are used to establish the fake undersupply. Commercial hoarders, who began speculating in defense goods early in 1940, reached out last winter to buy up and store civilian goods as well. Industry-wide marketing associations were formed to "stabilize"—*i.e.*, raise—prices. Many manufacturers restricted supply by so-called voluntary rationing, refusing to expand plants beyond the most profitable point.

The protesting consumer is offered shrugs and explanations as phony as the boom. They boil down to: "C'est la guerre." He is told that reemployment in war industries creates a demand for consumer goods with which production cannot keep pace. Yet, there are still an estimated 8,000,000 unemployed, patently weak in buying power, and the country is not using more than fifty percent of its productive capacity, according to an official of the Office of Production Management. Another "explanation" is that supplies have been diminished by government purchases for army and navy use. Harriet Elliott, consumer rep-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



"Going Our Way?"

resentative in the Office of Price Administration and Civilian Supply, spikes that idea. She says, for example, that army purchases of meat "are not large enough to affect prices significantly." (Meats have gone up fifteen to thirty percent.)

The buying public is not the only victim. Small-time manufacturers and retailers are being squeezed out. A men's-wear manufacturer, an honest and thoughtful man, told me the story of what is happening in his industry. This is how it goes, he said: The government now is in the market for uniforms and other cloth products. Defense orders absorb about forty percent of production capacity. The remaining sixty percent could be, but is not, used to turn out civilian goods. Mills which profit most by keeping production down won't try to fill both government and civilian needs. They ration supplies, and the big chains take up most of the goods. For instance, operators that sold my friend 200 pieces of gabardine last year, let him have fifty or seventy-five this year.

High prices are rigged by informal agreements among the few big monopolists. On the average, wool prices are up thirty to forty percent. The manufacturer who conducts his business on a small scale can't meet the new price. And he is denied liberal credit terms. At the same time, he fears that if he postpones stocking up, it won't be possible to obtain any supplies later on. Those who can manage it are taking everything they can get now from the mills.

THEN THE PROCESS is repeated. The retailer, forced to buy from the manufacturer on a "seller's market" (in which the buyer's price does not have to be met), stores away as much as he can afford. Inventories in the business are fifteen percent higher than a year ago, my informant estimated. Anyone who claims to sell the same quality of commodity at last year's price is probably not telling the truth, because the price rise is far too sharp for him to absorb.

There is no real shortage of wool. There has been no considerable increase in labor costs. Who, then, are the chief profiteers? Obviously, the big mill-owners and brokers. From the standpoint of the small manufacturer and retailer, the situation demands a solution. Monopolies should be curtailed; equitable price ceilings fixed by the government; equality of opportunity and liberal credit arrangements established for small businesses; and the consumers, themselves, should resist the price inflation. . . . So says my friend, the honest manufacturer. His demand for equitable price ceilings is echoed by Consumers Union. OPACS has shown a tendency to fix as the top price schedule, one far above normal. This is typified in Leon Henderson's fair maximum on combed cotton yarn, fixed at forty-two cents, or thirty-five percent above last year's price. (Incidentally, this industry clearly illustrates the irony of the consumer's position. Every cotton product has shot up in price; yet it is estimated that at the end of the current year there will be a domestic carry-over of some 13,000,000 bales, considerably more than a full year's crop.)

Henderson must be compelled by consumer-pressure to enforce price ceilings that conform with public welfare, not with monopoly interests. Minimum standards of quality must be established to circumvent the manufacturers who conceal price gains in lowered quality. To avoid industrial bootlegging, adequate supplies of goods must be assured. If the John Smiths throughout the country awaken to the fact that they are under siege from war profiteers, they will organize in consumer groups and insist on being heard at Washington.

PAULA COX.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE ISSUES AT STAKE: *A Reply to Some Questions*

New Masses' readers send in a few pointed queries. The practical consequences of holding political views no longer tenable. History and the changing world. An editorial.

IN RESPONSE to our editorials and articles of the past six weeks, NEW MASSES has received a flood of comment from its readers. The great body of our audience unquestionably supports the position we have taken. But there is enough genuine disagreement to be taken seriously. And we suspect that this disagreement reflects a much wider feeling that is still inarticulate. Since there can be no action without clarity, and since action toward a common front against Hitlerism is the supreme need of the hour, it becomes important to analyze the reservations which our correspondents express.

A "Regular NM Reader" opens the debate by maintaining that "the imperialist character of the present war between Nazi Germany and the British Empire has not changed fundamentally." He (or she) insists that such a change will come about "only when the embattled British people . . . form a People's Government." Then D. R. of San Francisco reminds us that Hitler is not a cause but an effect of capitalism-in-decline. He wants to know: "When the Soviet Union, Britain, and the United States have crushed Hitler, what then? Are Messieurs Churchill and Roosevelt going to allow the USSR to set up Soviets, freeing the people from slavery and bringing a return to sanity," or are we "to establish a bigger and better world fascism, with the United States and England unmolested by any imperialist rivals? Are we forging the instruments with which to beat Hitler but which will thereafter be used to beat us?" And finally, H. H. of Chicago voices grave doubts about what he calls our "blanket acceptance of Britain (and indirectly of the United States) as Soviet allies." He wants us to apply the "offensive-in-depth strategy" by indicating the "need to fight fascism in the USA and in England as well as along the Russian-German front."

These are frank and serious queries and they deserve replies in the same spirit. The exact wording of the questions is less important than the mood and habit of mind which they represent. It is a habit of mind which lends itself to inertia and political isolation at a time when unity with the mainstream of the American people is the chief job of the labor movement, of aggressive intellectuals in every walk of life. The readers who ask these questions would not want that.

NO, WE DO NOT BELIEVE it is possible to divide the war into sections, or determine its character by studying particular sections. To estimate the character of the war one must look at the whole, not the parts. And here is a case where the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. It is significant that our first questioner finds it necessary to narrow the war—"between Nazi Germany and the British Empire"—in order to consider it "imperialist." By this logic, one might have said that until June 22 the war had a progressive character because the independence of many small nations was at stake. Yet the character of the war until June 22 was determined, not by the fact that many small nations were involved, but by the fact that the big, decisive imperialist powers were locked in a struggle for hegemony. The small nations were pretexts, or avenues, through which the big nations, the decisive nations, got at each other.

Today, therefore, when the entire planet is at war, with the western hemisphere in a state of undeclared war, it is impossible to estimate the nature of this war by viewing parts of it. Hitler's attack on the Soviet Union makes it clear that Hitler is seeking not just a redivision of the capitalist world, but the destruction of the socialist world and the conquest of the whole globe. By trying to crush the Soviets, he is trying to crush everything that is rational, democratic, scientific, independent, and healthy everywhere. He is no longer fighting for hegemony of one continent but for world power, and what hangs on the outcome of this struggle are world decisions. This is what determines the character of the whole war. It serves no purpose to analyze incidental or partial aspects of the situation when the *dominant* fact is the crucial fact. The whole center of gravity in world politics has now shifted, and there is only one struggle on many different fronts; a struggle to regain the independence of nations, a struggle to shatter the power of fascism and open the way to a world victory of democracy.

WHAT ARE the practical consequences of trying to separate Britain's struggle from the Soviet Union's struggle? The consequences are nothing less than the risk of a Hitler victory. For that is precisely what Hitler is trying to do: to separate one enemy from another and prevent a world coalition of peoples and governments against him. That is what the America First Committee leadership is trying to do: to prevent the United States from cooperating with Britain together with the Soviet Union in smashing fascism. Such a line, moreover, plays into the hands of those, like the editors of the New York *Times*, who find themselves embarrassed by the Soviet Union's participation in the war. The *Times* talks of helping Britain but not the USSR. And it sets the tone for a number of public figures, who issue calls for action against Hitler without even mentioning the great fight of the Soviet people. This effort to deny the reality and integrity of the Anglo-Soviet alliance reached such dangerous proportions in England that Churchill himself was forced to come out flatly, insisting that the USSR was a full-fledged ally. If the reactionaries try to separate Britain from the Soviet Union, and if readers of NEW MASSES try to separate the Soviet Union from Britain, then the practical consequences will be the disintegration of the anti-Hitler front. Six years have taught us all the results of such disunity. Spain taught us that. In the interests of really winning this time, the war must be seen as one war. It must be urged as one war. It must be fought as one war.

This is not to deny that Britain and the United States remain imperialist countries. But they were also imperialist countries when we were urging a peace front to prevent the outbreak of the war. Here lies the fallacy of our friend who believes that the present war cannot be supported until the day a British People's Government is victorious. Did our friend have that attitude toward the Franco-Soviet pact of mutual assistance which the French foreign minister, Louis Barthou, negotiated in Moscow in the fall of 1934—before the victory of the French People's Front? Is this not the attitude of those pseudo-socialists who will not fight for immediate gains under capitalism on the grounds that our problems will only be solved under socialism? Was this not precisely the attitude of the *New Republic* and its friends, who would not cooperate to save collective security on the grounds that this would involve cooperation with imperialist governments, on the grounds that a war which might break out if the fascists defied the peace front would be an imperialist war? In the case of Spain, remember the powerful movement for aid to Spain, and remember that we favored immediate assistance to Spain, *especially* by Britain and France, which were certainly not less imperialist in their character than the Britain of today.

Our friend misses the real state of affairs. To frustrate the Anglo-Soviet alliance because Britain does not have a People's Front government means not only to risk the Soviet Union's defeat but Britain's defeat as well. And obviously, if the Soviet Union were defeated, the British people would be a thousand times further away from complete fulfillment of their democratic aspirations than they are today, or will be when their common struggle against Hitler is victorious.

The questioner does not seem to appreciate the profound ferment within Britain, which every type of commentator acknowledges. Our own Claude Cockburn reports immense enthusiasm in Britain for the alliance; the British people, he said last week, see the USSR as equivalent to the support the United States was going to give them in 1944. Even in the *New Yorker*, in a recent issue, Mollie

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Panter-Downes describes what she calls the "discovery of Russia" taking place in England, the "most exciting thing that has happened here in many years." The fact of the matter is that conditions exist in Britain today for a very wide basis of popular action, a *national front* with all forces that stand opposed to fascism. Preoccupation with an eventual goal such as a People's Government would lead to the neglect and dissipation of the present and potential unity of the British people. The Anglo-Soviet alliance is therefore not a mere expedient, or temporary tactic, necessarily doomed to reversal in the course of time. It opens up the possibility of a permanent collaboration between the British and Soviet peoples for the establishment of a permanent peace in Europe.

What our friend does not realize is that the Anglo-Soviet alliance is a tremendous defeat for those forces of British imperialism that have snubbed, rejected, tried to isolate and destroy the Soviet Union for twenty-five years. The British appeasers find themselves in a situation in which Hitler has at last attacked the USSR, which is what they had so ardently desired—but they also find themselves in a situation in which they cannot take advantage of the moment for their own purposes. They are compelled to continue the war against Germany. They are compelled, as it were, to yield to the British People's Convention which has long demanded collaboration with the Soviets.

It should be obvious that the fulfillment of our position would in no way strengthen imperialism as a world system. It would not, as our questioner thinks, mean the "establishment of a bigger and better world fascism." On the contrary, it would give a tremendous lift to popular energies and hopes throughout Europe, in Germany (the heart of capitalist Europe), and in the whole colonial world.

BUT THEN, there is another question. D. R. of San Francisco is afraid that Messieurs Churchill and Roosevelt are not going to "allow" the USSR "to set up Soviets," freeing the people from slavery . . . etc. To us, this seems to be very inadequate and dangerous ground. To begin with, the USSR is not going to "set up Soviets" for anybody. It will be up to the peoples of Europe to decide, once their independence is assured, just what kind of government and society each nation will erect on the ruins of fascism.

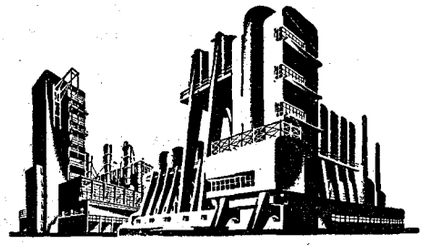
In actual fact, however, to speak of "Soviets" as though they were the immediate objective of the present struggle means to justify Hitler's claim that he is "fighting against Bolshevism." It means to skip a whole historical stage in the evolution of European liberation: the stage which we are now facing, the stage of the struggle for democratic liberties, of national independence, the stage in which the entire progressive population of every capitalist nation has the possibilities of cooperation on an anti-Hitler program. The essence of politics is never to confuse the stages of political evolution.

Nor is there any point in running ahead of affairs and refusing to cooperate with Roosevelt and Churchill today because they may endeavor to turn against their own declared policies tomorrow. The present issue is only whether Roosevelt and Churchill will implement their own declared policies, whether the peoples of Britain and the United States shall cooperate with the Soviet people in disintegrating the Nazi war machine. On this program everybody can cooperate, irrespective of their speculations on the future. Unless the danger is averted now, there may never be time for a determination of Europe's future by the democratic action of the peoples themselves.

Nor is it true, as one question puts it, that the instruments we are forging to beat Hitler must necessarily be used against us at some time in the future. What are those instruments? Not merely tanks and guns and ships—these *alone* will not defeat Hitler no matter how much we have of them, and we must have more. Our crucial armament is the mobilization of the peoples and governments behind a program of immediate action. Our most powerful armament is the activity of the people in their organizations of every kind—they alone hold the guarantee that the arms which must be used against Hitler will not be used against themselves. In proportion as Soviet and British soldiers and sailors cooperate side by side today, to that extent it will be more difficult (if not impossible) for anybody to turn the British soldiers against the Soviet soldiers tomorrow. In proportion as British and Soviet troops jointly liberate the peoples under Hitler's heel, it will be impossible for *anybody* to flout the will of the European peoples tomorrow.

THERE ARE RISKS in every course of human action. If we remain paralyzed today, Hoover and Lindbergh must certainly get the better of us tomorrow. If we all act quickly and firmly today in smashing the main forces of international fascism, the chances of Roosevelt or Churchill doing a "Hoover" will be much less tomorrow. The real difficulty with our friend who fears to act today on account of what may happen tomorrow is this: he underestimates how urgent it is to forge powerful instruments against a powerful foe; he also underestimates how powerful the peoples of the world will be when that foe is defeated.

Does this mean, as H. H. of Chicago believes, that we have made a "blanket acceptance of Britain and the United States as Soviet allies"? Does that mean that we have given up, as he implies, our "offensive in depth"—the fight against fascism at home as well as abroad? Obviously not. He has missed the whole point.



Our own interest in bringing about unity of British, American, Chinese, and Soviet action arises from the fact that we are American citizens, for whom the interest of our own country is paramount but not contradictory to the Soviet interest. We wish cooperation and joint action in this war not because we have only the Soviet interest at heart, but because our interest as Americans and the Soviet interest are identical. Nor are we making a "blanket acceptance" of our own government. On the contrary, we are engaged in criticizing every vacillation, every hesitation in our own government. We are not satisfied at all with what the President has done so far. We are not satisfied with the rate at which things are moving. If anything, in our minds the danger is not that our government and Britain will become too intimately connected with this struggle; the danger is much more real that the United States will drift away from Britain, and try to influence the British to drift away from the common struggle with the Soviets to which they are pledged.

NOR ARE WE in the slightest abandoning the struggle against fascism at home. On the contrary, the issues are so related that the defeat of fascism at home and abroad is the same objective. To stop Hitler it will be necessary to stop Hitlerizing America. It will be necessary to maintain civil liberties, to cease such persecutions as in Oklahoma, or as in the Schappes case. It will be necessary to free Earl Browder, America's great anti-fascist commander. It will be necessary to break the sabotage of the defense program by the monopolist industrialists, to expand production rather than curtail civilian goods. It will be necessary to open opportunities for employment to the Negro people. It will be necessary to end all discrimination against any American on grounds of political beliefs, national origin, or color. The defeat of fascism implies the independence and integrity of the colonial peoples; it implies aid to China; it implies the advancement of the Latin American nations toward economic independence with the unselfish assistance of the American people. It implies routing the agents of fascism, native and foreign, from our own State Department and from the entire hemisphere. It implies the democratization of the armed forces, the instillation of democratic, anti-fascist ideals in our army and navy.

Our position today forms a continuous pattern with our position of yesterday and the day before yesterday. By now, six weeks after this mortal struggle has begun, it should become possible to move on from the period of debate and discussion to the period of action. It is not an easy struggle in which we are engaged, either abroad or at home. But it is the only path which is possible, and holds forth the hope of all progressive mankind: defeating the hosts of a dying world, and arraying the armies of a new and better world.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE "PORCUPINE" POCKETS

An analysis of the Red Army's guerrilla tactics by Colonel T. Modern weapons. Morale and a determined population. . . . Lucien Zacharoff comments on the USSR's air-raid defenses.

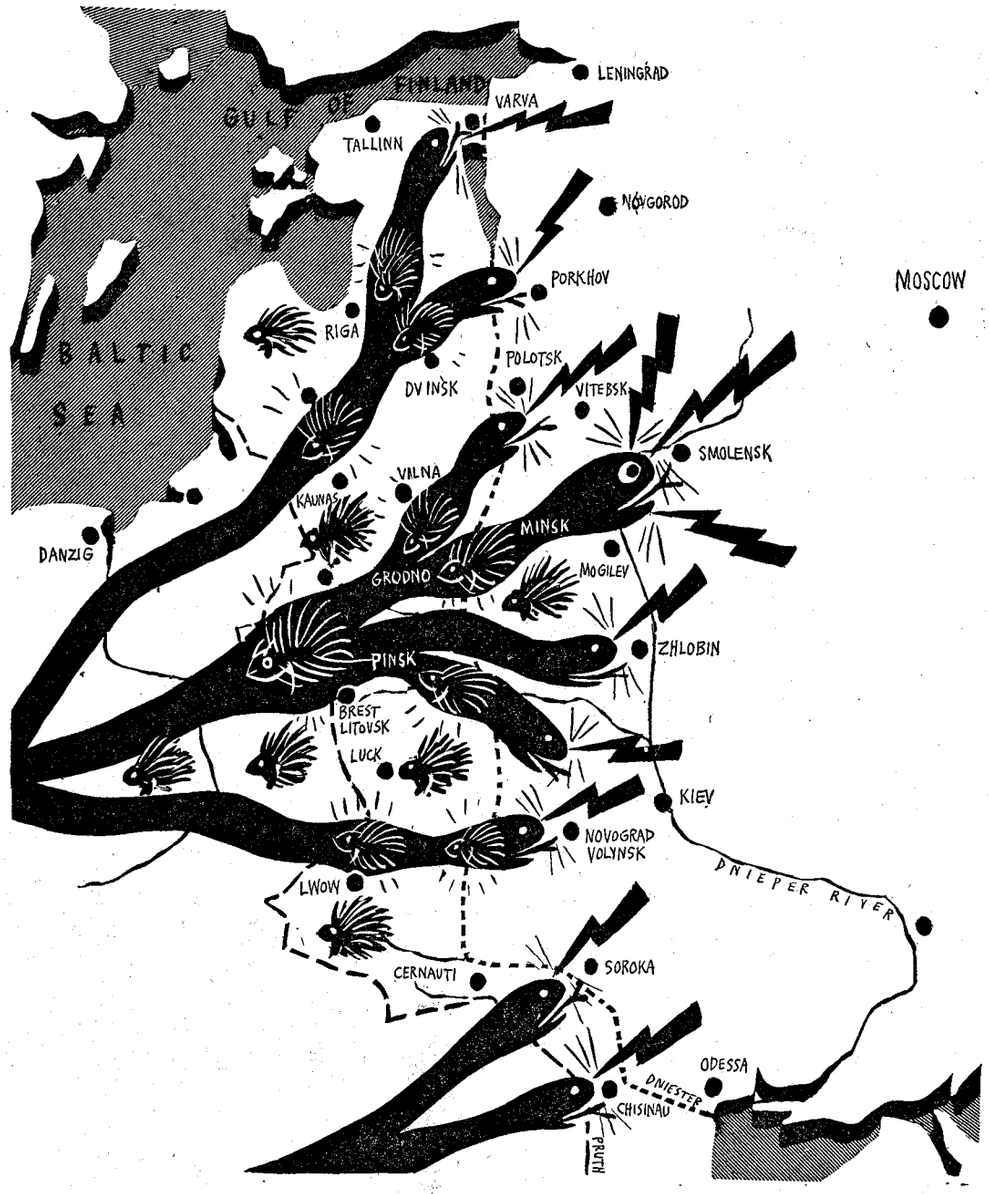
THE military experts and their trustful followers continue to stare at the maps of the Eastern Front and seem to see only the line which runs through the tips of the German spearheads. At present the experts think in terms of Narva, Porkhov, Nevel, Smolensk, Mohilev, Zhlobin, Zhitomir, Soroka. The line is fairly straight, with a large bulge at Smolensk. It is a line removed from the 1941 border of the USSR by some 325—300—275—400—325—250—160—50 miles in the order of the names of the towns given above. (The average German penetration was 7.5 miles daily with a maximum of 11 miles per day and a minimum of 1.4.)

Eight German "serpents" are writhing on a territory of some 160,000 square miles. But does that mean they are covering this territory and that it is theirs even in the strictly military sense? Of course not. On what grounds do we make that claim? On the grounds that the German "serpents" have had to swallow some 50,000 "porcupines," or 50,000 "lost" Soviet squads which are tearing the intestines of the big reptiles while the divisions, army corps, and armies of the Soviet forces are hammering at their heads and choking them behind the ears (assuming that serpents have ears, of which we are not sure). So we see that looking at the fangs of the serpents does not give us a true picture of what is going on. We talk about "two Hitler fronts," but we are inclined to forget the second Hitler front—the one that is tearing the bowels of his army. The Germans have a word for it: they call it "pockets of Russian insane resistance" which play havoc with their communications and, in conjunction with the "weather" and the "bad roads," slow down their advance so that it crawls "according to plan" and "successfully."

Some military reviewers have used the word "porcupines" to describe these pockets of resistance. This seems to me a very apt description. And it is quite clear that if a porcupine had the nerve to let a boa-constrictor swallow him with his quills down, and then stood them up inside the boa's bowels, the porcupine would always kill the boa. I predicated this little zoological example on the porcupine's nerve. Speaking of nerve (or morale) in the strictly military sense, the acid test of the quality of any troops is provided at the front by their reaction to the fact that their flank is enveloped, to say nothing of the appearance of the enemy in the rear. During the seventy-odd months this writer has spent in active warfare on various fronts he has seen few troops—nay, few officers—who could keep their stability when the cry arose: *"We have been outflanked!"*

But the Red Army troops seem to have

(Continued on page 18)



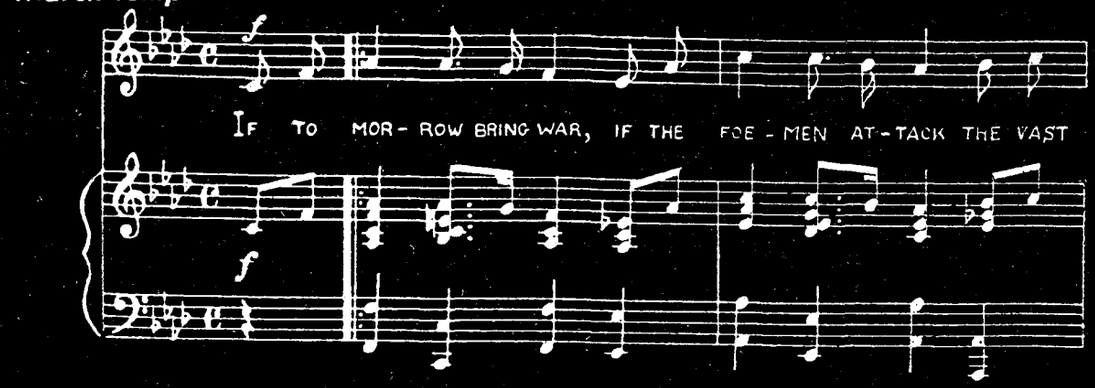
Here's a visual presentation of what Colonel T. describes as the "porcupine front." Behind the Nazi columns, in and around the towns and villages which the Nazis passed in their early advances, thousands of Red Armymen are conducting a new type of guerrilla war. Well armed and equipped from previously designated depots, the regular army has broken up into small units, and in conjunction with the local population is carrying on increasingly destructive operations: sniping at tanks and officers' cars, cutting off the commissaries, smashing up the gasoline and ammunition trucks, making things generally miserable for the invading armies. Thus, the Nazis are losing the advantages of their initial territorial gains. They are finding it difficult to maintain their pressure on the advanced Soviet positions along the line of heavy fortifications. Simultaneously, the Soviet communiques report the beginning of local counter-offensives, well supported from the air, which are hitting hard in the Smolensk, Zhitomir, and the Lake Peipus sectors, so that the Nazis find themselves faced with counter-pressure on their advanced columns precisely at the moment when guerrilla activities are hampering them most in the rear. Late reports confirm that Smolensk, the furthest point of the German advance, remains in Soviet hands. Kiev is still relatively secure while the drive for Leningrad seems to have stalled. In the air, the Nazis have not scored anything notable in their five or six raids on Moscow.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

IF TOMORROW BRINGS WAR

Words by Vasily LEBEDEV-KUMACH *Music by Dmitri and Daniel POKRASS*

March tempo



PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

LAND, IN THE SKY, ON THE O - CEAN IN STERN VOI - CES THIS SLO-GAN DE
CLARED - IF TO MOR-ROW BRING WAR, IF TO MOR-ROW THE CLASH, BE TO
DAY FOR THE BAT-TLE PRE-PARED. IF TO MOR-ROW BRING WAR IF TO
3
MOR-ROW THE CLASH BE TO-DAY FOR THE BAT-TLE PRE - PARED.

PROVIDED BY USALOPC
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

that nerve. Not only do they remain calm when outflanked and even surrounded by mechanized German columns. They purposely let themselves be surrounded—as they did in the great areas which must still be labeled with large question marks: northwestern Latvia, Kovno, Minsk, Grodno, Brest-Litovsk, the huge expanse of the Pripet Marshes, Western Galicia, and large portions of Bessarabia. These areas are covered with "pockets" of resistance. They teem with large and small "porcupines," their quills erect, and spitting fire. In these areas some 50,000 "lost squads" of the Red Army are directing *organized,* not spontaneous, guerrilla warfare. This is a new type of guerrilla warfare, with modern weapons instead of pitchforks and woodsmen's axes. It is possible only in a country whose population is overwhelmingly devoted to the cause for which the Army is fighting, a population whose government *is not afraid to arm and teach the use of arms on a mass scale.*

This is not merely a political point. We soldiers look at the military side of a problem first. Naturally, in viewing these thousands of islands of determined and *integrated* resistance, we ask: where is the material base of that resistance? From where do they replenish their ranks? Who directs their operations? Why did not the troops that lead them collapse and surrender when they were first surrounded?

A good answer to some of these questions is provided in an article by Berthold C. Friedl in the New York *Times* of July 27. Mr. Friedl says:

> One of its [the Red Army's] outstanding activities has been the training of soldiers and officers for guerrilla war, and the providing of technical bases for this type of fighting. Emphasis has been laid on making small army units independent of the center, through the development of initiative even among the lowest commanding officers. All its units are capable, if cut off from the main body, of continuing the battle. When the Army is forced to fall back, *predetermined* groups remain behind the enemy lines and form the kernel of future guerrilla units. Not only do these groups have at their disposal specially made small, speedy tanks and sometimes even artillery (an entirely new feature in this type of fighting), but there are also previously located bases to which they can retreat and where they find supplies, arms and munitions. . . .
>
> In such a guerrilla war, ordinary methods of assessing victory and defeat and old conceptions of what positions are militarily defensible or indefensible become worthless. *While in past Nazi campaigns the conquest of a key position was the end of a battle, in this one it is only the beginning.* [Emphasis mine.]

Now as to "old conceptions." When, on Aug. 26, 1940, Marshal Timoshenko made a speech at the conclusion of tactical exercises of an infantry division of the Moscow Military Area, he said, in part:

> We must bring to the consciousness of every commander and every political worker the fact that it is our basic task in this current year to raise and make all-powerful the squad, the section, the company, the battalion, the regiment. If we put this link [of the military chain] on its feet in all units and if it does acquire the culture of the art of war in its fullest sense—our formations will be able under conditions of war to fight with comparatively little blood spilt.

At that time the BHW's (Brass Hats of the World) said that this was a platitude, which sounded childish coming from a commander-in-chief. Others, more spiteful, said that it was a sign that "the Red Army had been brought up wrongly before that" and that Timoshenko was launching one of these perennial "reorganizations."

Both statements are typical of Brass Hat thinking. Timoshenko foresaw the future "battle of the pockets," he envisioned the work of the future "porcupines" in the belly of the boa constrictor. As to "reorganizations"—woe to the army that does not reorganize itself continually. Such an army is bound to rot and fall behind its prospective opponents. *Neither the organization of an army nor its mobilization is ever completed.* This is a thing to remember.

Timoshenko's so-called "reform" was not a denunciation of Voroshilov's previous conduct of affairs, as the Brass Hats would have it. It was a logical development in the light of what happened in the campaigns in the West. Timoshenko saw the boa constrictors crawling over Belgium, Holland, and France; he saw the awe-struck allied troops surrendering the moment they were outflanked; he saw the heroic stand of the British at Dunkerque—and he had the vision of the "porcupines," tens of thousands of them tearing the bowels of the boas.

These porcupines can operate only when: (1) the local population is with them heart and soul; and (2) when their own morale is on a very high level. Hence the necessity for special men to conduct "public relations" with the population, to see that heart and soul remain with the guerrilla troops and, finally, to keep up the morale of commanders and men under extremely trying circumstances. This is a man-sized job: the job of the military commissar.

Neither the Brass Hats nor Hitler and his generals can understand this. They speak of "disintegration" in the Red Army; they boast of "surrounding" hundreds of thousands of Soviet troops; and they claim that the Russians "don't know the rules of warfare and don't know when to surrender." To cover up the appearance of this terrifying "second front," the German Command announces the "capture" of from 300,000 to 500,000 Russians. The Germans always think in terms of "Erste Kolonne marshiert, zweite Kolonne marshiert, dritte Kolonne marshiert . . ." (the first column marches, the second column marches, the third column marches), but they are baffled when "Ein ganzes Volk marshiert" (the entire people marches).

Fifty thousand "lost squads"—one squad for every three square miles. That's an awfully big battle.

COLONEL T.

Air Raid Defense

PERHAPS the most characteristic feature of the Soviet Union's defense against air raids is the role played by civilians. As the Russians see the problem, it is not enough to provide safe shelters and to herd the people into them. Safe shelters there are—plenty of them—comfortably furnished with facilities for sleep, with newspapers and magazines and popular books for those who want to pass the time reading, with radios for news and music. But, while these provisions help to keep morale at a peak, the emphasis is on the principle that morale is strengthened when men and women participate actively in the fight to protect their city and their neighbors. For years before the Nazis invaded the USSR, millions of men, women, and children have been training themselves for the emergency that they knew would come some day.

The civilian defense society, known as the *Osoaviakhim,* boasts more than 15,000,000 members. Instruction circles in factories and offices and on the collective farms trained these millions, taught them how to spot approaching raiders, the most efficient way to reach shelters, to handle gas masks, to "de-gas" their cities after chemical attacks. They were instructed in fire fighting, the rudiments of first aid, and ways of quickly removing debris after the raiders had been driven out of the sky.

The thousands of *Osoaviakhim* circles, organized in the most remote corners of the land, also trained the people in home defense—thus establishing a mighty reservoir for the armed forces and preparing the people for guerrilla fighting. Millions in the Soviet Union practiced parachute jumping, learned how to fly a plane and guide a glider. Others were expert equestrians, or proficient in handling a rifle, throwing hand grenades, and even using a bayonet. They were good, too, at repairing telephone and telegraph wires and in setting up field wireless sets. They knew what to do when enemy parachutists landed in the neighboring fields. They were trained in marching and in simple military formations that could stand them in very good stead during emergencies. As a result, recruits entering the Red Army and Navy already were familiar with rudimentary military training.

EVEN MORE, the *Osoaviakhim* went outside its own membership, educating housewives, students, workers, and farmers. The emphasis was always on civilian protection and cooperation with the armed forces at the front. Hikes were organized, with the participants marching in gas masks—as many as 50,000 people took part in such marches at one time. A month before the fascists crossed the frontiers of the USSR, 7,000 Muscovites spent the week-end practicing methods of repulsing parachute troops.

As a result of this program, town and

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

country today are in a state of mobilization, with each man and woman—and child—knowing what is expected of him. Each home is a factor in anti-air raid defense. Long before the war every Soviet citizen who could read must have come across at least one of the millions of paper-covered books which explained in popular language the problems of civilian defense. These books, issued by the *Osoaviakhim,* the Commissariat of Defense, and other publishing groups (with such titles as *Chemistry in War, Be Prepared for the Anti-Air Raid and Anti-Chemical Defense!* and *Protection of Animals against Military Poison Substances*), made exciting reading. They were illustrated with drawings, photographs, charts so that nothing was taken for granted, no detail was unexplained or neglected. Today there is no danger of panic or confusion when sirens sound the warning of approaching bombers.

IF a state of emergency is proclaimed, the entire community mobilizes. A twenty-four-hour vigil is established by previously appointed civilian guards who take up their stations in all public buildings, apartment houses, and even private dwellings, in schools and colleges, in offices and factories. These guards maintain strict order and see to it that blackout regulations are followed without exception.

Once an emergency status is proclaimed, all citizens observe the following rules:

1. They carry with them gas masks at all times, as well as individual first-aid kits and chemical de-contamination outfits.
2. They are on the alert for announcements, orders, and signals already memorized from the anti-air raid defense headquarters.
3. Members of self-defense units must be prepared the moment an alarm is sounded to report to a prearranged meeting place.
4. All lights are turned off in living quarters, after the alarm, until windows are properly shrouded with curtains.
5. All window panes have been covered with crossed strips of heavy paper which lessens the effect of air concussions from explosions and keeps glass fragments from scattering.
6. All fire prevention rules are scrupulously observed. Reserves of drinking water are kept in covered containers and changed daily.

Many volumes could be written about the complete readiness of Soviet civilians to cope with incendiary bombs, gas attacks, and other horrors of war. The cornerstone of preparedness rests on the individual's knowledge of self-defense, his ability to function in first-aid, fire-extinguishing, de-gassing, repairing, and other groups. Civilian protection based on self-help not only does away with panic, but immeasurably increases the safety of the individual. Its effect on the armed services is that of encouragement, a guarantee that behind the lines the efficient functioning of the people is assured.

LUCIEN ZACHAROFF.

How I Feel About the War

"New Masses" has invited a number of prominent individuals to comment on the Soviet-Nazi war and on the question of aid to the USSR and Britain in order to defeat Hitlerism. In publishing them, "New Masses" does not necessarily agree with all that is said. Whatever differences there may be, however, we feel that the most important thing at this time is to unite all those who wish the defeat of Hitlerism behind a program of full assistance to the Soviet Union, Britain, and the peoples fighting Nazism.—The Editors.

Philip M. Connelly

President, California State Industrial Union Council

SUPPOSE that the Nazi armies were cutting through Russia like a hot knife through butter; suppose the legions of fascism were advancing now as they did in the low countries, France, and the Balkans. Such a supposition, in itself, is enough to make Americans thankful that, for the first time, fascism is meeting capable and determined opposition. Such a thankfulness brings with it the realization that, were it not for this opposition, fascism would soon be in a position to destroy Americanism by surrounding it with the overwhelming force of nine-tenths of the manpower and natural resources of the world. The elemental principle of self-preservation, if nothing else, requires us to support everything and everyone who opposes fascism.

John Howard Lawson

THERE is one great common need which unites all the freedom-loving people of the world today—to defeat the Nazi threat, to wipe Hitler and Hitlerism from the face of the globe. Hitler's attack on the Soviet Union has carried the war into a new and decisive phase. Hitler's friends in this country are openly admitting their affection for Nazism; these reactionaries and appeasers are traitors to the United States. For at this turning point in the war, there can be no doubt that further victories for the bloody Hitler machine of destruction would constitute a threat to the national security of the United States. Hitler can be beaten decisively and finally: the people of the Soviet Union are doing their part; they are fighting for their own land and freedom—but their victory will mean the freeing of the enslaved people of Europe. It will mean an opportunity to build toward permanent peace and security in Europe—and in the world. In order to safeguard our American future, we should cooperate actively, and to the fullest extent of our strength and resources, with Great Britain and the Soviet Union.

Lin Yutang

I THINK the Russo-German war is of such a character that its effect will be almost decisive for this World War. I do not think that the war can be fought out conclusively in a short period of time. The Russians have already given evidence of both good morale and a good state of military preparedness. But more than that, Russian preparedness extends to the development of industrial bases east of Moscow. Even if the Germans should reach Moscow, that would not mean a Russian collapse, because the General Staff has envisaged all these years the tactics of an eastward retreat. The Russians would also naturally be the first to profit from the lesson of the Napoleonic war. Furthermore, they are adepts at sabotage in occupied territories. Therefore the Russians can be counted on to tie up Hitler's army for a long time. Win or lose, Hitler's army will find the costs of a march on Moscow so great that its fighting strength will be weakened to an important extent. By weakening the German air force and mechanized forces and particularly by upsetting Hitler's time-table, I believe the Russian resistance will prove to be the turning point in this world war in the eyes of future historians.

Dwight J. Bradley

Executive Director, Council for Social Action, Congregational and Christian Churches

IT HAS been my consistent and unchanging belief ever since the outbreak of the civil war in Spain that the United States, Great Britain, China, Soviet Russia and all other free peoples should collaborate in fullest measure for the elimination of Adolph Hitler from power over the lives and destinies of men. I continue to hold this opinion. No matter what minor or secondary changes may arise in the world situation, these are of small consequence in comparison with the necessity of ending Hitler's regime.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

NEW MASSES

ESTABLISHED 1911

Editors

BARBARA GILES, A. B. MAGIL, RUTH McKENNEY, BRUCE MINTON, JOSEPH NORTH, JOSEPH STAROBIN, JOHN STUART

Business Manager

CARL BRISTEL

★

The Week Abroad

THE Red Army has stalled the Nazis along the "gigantic, continuous Verdun" of the Eastern Front, but in the meantime a powerful diplomatic counter-offensive is taking place in the heart of Europe. Last week, the Czech government in exile signed a mutual assistance treaty with the Soviet Union, and a Czech legion will be formed on Soviet soil under Soviet command. This agreement begins the avenging of the Munich disaster: the USSR, which was the only great power to offer the Czechoslovak people unconditional assistance in the black days of September 1938, now unites with the Czechoslovak people in practical measures of war against Hitler. It is something of an historical irony also that whereas Czech troops were the instruments of intervention against the young Soviet republics twenty years ago, Czechoslovak soldiers will now be fighting in an army of liberation, not only in defense of Soviet soil but in defense of their own future.

Likewise, negotiations are virtually completed for a pact between the USSR and Yugoslavia, proceeding from the treaty of friendship signed on the eve of the overthrow of the pro-Hitler government in Belgrade on March 27. And in London, negotiations are reported well under way with the Polish Cabinet in exile. In the midst of the war, therefore, the outlines of a just peace and the real self-determination of nations are beginning to emerge. One can only imagine how much enthusiasm and heroic self-sacrifice this news will evoke everywhere behind Hitler's lines.

A SIGNIFICANT SIDELIGHT is the report that two delegations from the *Histadruth,* the Zionist trade union organization in Palestine, are already en route to Moscow. They are bringing greetings of fraternal solidarity and offers of medical aid. In this country and elsewhere, the Zionist labor leaders have long been among the most prejudiced and fanatical critics of the Soviet Union. Should this prejudice continue these leaders would be out of step, not only with the feelings of the great majority of the Jewish people, but with the *Histadruth* as well.

TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY has been one of the most ambiguous aspects of the war, but the evidence begins to accumulate that decisions will soon have to be made around the Dardanelles and the southern shore of the Black Sea. Soviet sources reported last week that all of the German troops in Libya have now been transported to Bulgaria, while independent sources speak of a general mobilization in Bulgaria, along the Turkish frontier, that is scheduled to be finished by September. In Turkey itself, the economic discussions that were supposed to supplement the non-aggression pact with Germany have once again been postponed; the Turks seem not to relish talking things over with Herr Clodius, the Nazi Trade Minister, just now. All this confirms the revelations by S. A. Lozovsky, the Soviet Vice-Commissar for Foreign Affairs, that detailed geographic and military data on eastern Thrace and the Dardanelles have been distributed among individual German regiments preparatory to a German attack on Turkey. It will be remembered that the Nazis, in the first days of the war, charged the Soviet Union with aggressive designs on the Straits—which the Soviet spokesmen contemptuously refuted. Now it comes out that the Nazis themselves have eyes on this region, their treaties with Turkey notwithstanding. Turkey is definitely a place to watch in the next few months.

HARRY HOPKINS' speech from London was encouraging, both as regards the amount of materiel we are sending to Britain and the assurance that our Navy will see to it that the supplies arrive. But it was also encouraging because of Hopkins' direct reference to aid for China and the Soviet Union, a reference which supports our impression that Mr. Hopkins was sent to London to consider, among other matters, just how our supplies for Britain could be dovetailed with help for the USSR. Hopkins is the latest of many administration spokesmen to link the British and the Soviet struggles. Ickes was among the first, and Paul McNutt followed in a strong speech in Indiana two weeks ago. Latest is Wendell Willkie himself. After failing to mention the USSR at all in one of his speeches on the West Coast, Willkie devoted a good section of another the following evening to a slam at those who would spike American assistance to the USSR.

Some ten days ago, Secretary of Commerce Jesse Jones announced the possibility of an exchange of Soviet manganese for American machine tools, an exchange which would undoubtedly help the USSR, provided priorities were granted for the manufacture of machine tools. But the arrival of the Red Army mission in Washington by airplane via Montreal places the question on a political rather than trade level only. There is still too much prejudice, ignorance, and underestimation of the Soviet Union in some Washington circles. There is not enough of a forthright realization that among Britain, the Soviet Union, and ourselves all the outstanding issues raised by Hitler Germany can be solved.

One of the alarming reports of the past week is a story from London which says that the British hesitate to invade the continent without assurance of large scale American support. If this story is true, then it is of vital concern to Americans. If the British are awaiting our say-so, and a guarantee of sufficient supplies from this country before undertaking an invasion, then everything possible must be done to guarantee those supplies. There ought to be no hesitation in Washington about assuring the British of our full support. Real action on the Western Front is the simplest and most direct way to shorten this war, to end it with the rapid defeat of German fascism.

Direct from Goebbels

APPEASEMENT has become so malodorous that the advocates of capitulation to Hitlerism resort to all sorts of verbal camouflage to get an audience. Even so, despite all heroics and ranting, the Wheeler-Lindbergh-Coughlin triumvirate cannot entirely conceal their anti-Semitism, their contempt for the people and democracy, their villainous assault on civil rights, that mark the fascist. Yet they are not without allies. It is well to remember that this cabal of busy appeasers are being given aid and comfort by many who pretend to fulminate against them and their ways.

The list of all the guilty is far too long to name. But typical is *Life* magazine, which in its July 28 issue serves Goebbels well by giving the fullest publicity to the most cherished Nazi handout. "The Germany Army of 1941," *Life* declares, "is the greatest fighting outfit ever assembled. Germany was last week decisively beating Soviet Russia." The only thing wrong with this statement is that the news sent by correspondents and tacitly affirmed by the German communiques brands it a lie. It rivals the Hearst headline claims of "GERMANY ACHIEVING EASTERN GOAL." But *Life* and Hearst do not go unrivaled; the *United States News* reports: "War's timetable as seen by best informed US officers: An attainment of Hitler's objective in Russia by September 15." Or *Collier's* editorial entitled, "We Still Like Finland," which praises General Mannerheim and his "dauntless little nation," and concludes that "We don't blame Finland."

For our part, we submit that the appeasers have picked up valuable cohorts in the press. Put it this way: The British and Soviet allies are fighting to the death against fascism. The United States is pledged to full support in this effort. The Red Army has, as the New York *Herald Tribune* remarks, "created a greater democratic opportunity than any had a right to expect." But a very large section of the American press spends its energy "proving" that the Soviet Union is already defeated and its collapse is only a matter of a brief time. *This is contrary to the facts.* And the lie amounts to sabotage of our allies and of the pledges made by our government. Better friends Herr Hitler and the appeasers cannot desire.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Labor's Defense Plan

THE CIO, through President Murray, has called for equal participation by labor and management in the planning of defense production. But Sidney Hillman and his colleagues have steadfastly refused to hear of such a thing. Hillman has offered instead his "advisory" boards, through which labor can "advise" to its heart's content, and then management does as it pleases. The rejection of the CIO Defense Plan has encouraged the monopoly practices of profit-crazy corporations. For example, Leon Henderson's recent threat to curtail auto output by 50 percent, thereby endangering the jobs of 200,000 workers, would never have been suggested had labor been granted a say in defense councils. Because such curtailment is unreasonable.

The CIO has called for reduction in automobile manufacture "as defense production necessitates," with reemployment assured the men displaced. Alfred P. Sloan, Jr., chairman of the General Motors Corp., admits that curtailment at the present time "cannot possibly result in any measurable acceleration in the production of materials for national defense" since plant facilities are still too limited. Defense needs should take precedence—that is true. But defense needs must be met by increasing the productive apparatus. This is a problem that will undoubtedly receive much attention at the forthcoming convention of the United Automobile Workers which meets in Buffalo on August 4. The union has already echoed the CIO in urging the government to force the great corporations to build adequate plants expanding the present limited capacity. Moreover, defense orders, up to now awarded almost entirely to the dominant monopolies, should be distributed among the smaller firms.

Wrong Way Henderson

THE government reluctantly admits that production is lagging seriously. This lag has been made the excuse to call for greater sacrifices from consumers, already hard hit by badly conceived priorities which could be made superfluous with proper attention to the task of eliminating bottlenecks. Indeed, production shortages result from OPM bungling and not, as the OPM would have it, from any inability to produce. Yet, instead of facing the problem, Leon Henderson, government price administrator, warns that retail prices will skyrocket and consumers must expect rationing which "means that someone is going to get hurt." More recently, Henderson has talked about "controlling wages" as well. His words amount to a notification to workers that they will be expected to take wage cuts, either through arbitrarily—and needlessly—imposed rationing, or through sanctioned price rises far surpassing wage levels. In addition, wages would be frozen if they showed signs of keeping pace to any degree with the mounting cost of living. Such an outlook assures the monopolists continued profits—at present high marks and with the prospect of still higher takes in the future. The rich would get richer by government decree.

That defense will cost great sums is obvious: that the burden should be carried by those least able to bear it is something quite different. Henderson's plans ignore the country's vital needs. For America, intent on defending its security and traditions against outside attack, dare not turn about and capitulate to enemies at home. Monopoly has consistently sabotaged defense; the great industrialists seek profits, and to hell with all problems having to do with the nation's genuine safety.

But there are better ways of building our defenses than those which Henderson offers. And these are: to tax the corporations and the wealthy, put a ceiling on prices to consumers, preserve and increase wage standards, force the industrial giants to give employment, put all available production equipment into use. To defend our way of life, the people must have a way of life worthy of their effort and their sacrifice. Leon Henderson's proposals would rob them of that.

Hitting the Little People

HITTING one's own fingers with a hammer is hardly the most effective way of fighting fascism. The tax bill reported by the House Ways and Means Committee does just about that. Not that we don't need to raise that $3,500,000,000 in additional revenue; we urgently do. But we ought to raise it in a way that will help, not hinder, the people's struggle against Hitlerism. The tax program was originally conceived with an eye toward appeasing reaction. Though the Treasury Department's proposals have been modified, their essential orientation has been retained. Of the $3,529,200,000 which this bill is designed to raise, $1,322,900,000 would be derived from an increase in the normal and excess profits taxes on corporations; $1,152,000,000 from higher levies on individual incomes; and $1,054,300,000 from miscellaneous excise taxes.

Let us consider these proposed taxes. The meager excess profits levy is to be boosted only ten percent, making it thirty to thirty-five percent in the lowest bracket and sixty percent in the highest. Compare this with the 100 percent excess profits tax imposed in Britain, though even that has by no means prevented large-scale profiteering. It is also proposed to add a surtax of five percent on the first $25,000 of corporation profits, and six percent above that amount. This will make the income tax for corporations earning over $25,000 a year only thirty percent, still well under the British rate of fifty percent.

The proposed rises in the individual income levies, while they punish the low- and middle-income groups less drastically than the original Treasury program, are still far from equitable. The American people are ready to make sacrifices to defend their independence, but the brunt of the burden should be borne by those who can afford it. Under the Ways and Means Committee's bill a single person earning $1,000 a year—less than $20 a week—and a married person with no dependents earning $2,500 a year would have their taxes increased 250 percent. On the other hand, a single person with a $500,000 income would have his taxes boosted only about five percent.

The excise taxes (really sales taxes) likewise fall most heavily on the masses of the people. If the Ways and Means Committee bill becomes law, you will pay increased taxes on liquor and wine, twice as much on your car, higher rates on your refrigerator and radio, two cents for every thousand matches, five percent on your telephone bills, one-sixth cent on every soft-drink bottle or its equivalent, a ten percent levy on phonographs and records, and a tax on a dime movie. And just to prove its fairness, the committee imposes a $5 "use" tax on your old jalopy, the same as on J. P. Morgan's yacht or plane.

America needs a tax program to implement the fight for freedom it is pledged to wage. Some months ago President Philip Murray of the CIO proposed such a program, one that would raise all necessary revenue by increased levies on high individual incomes, estates, and corporation profits. Just in case we forget about the luxuriance of the latter, General Motors has given us a little reminder: net profits for the second quarter of 1941 were $53,579,568, compared with $46,546,999 in the same period last year. This was after deducting all taxes and after salting away $20,000,000 for "contingency reserves." With a little prompting from constituents, figures like these ought to put ideas into congressmen's heads.

Congratulations

IT IS a special pleasure to extend greetings to the world-famous Marxist journal, *Labour Monthly*, which celebrated its twentieth anniversary last month. Edited by R. Palme Dutt, this magazine today enjoys greater prestige and influence in the British labor movement than at any previous period in its history. When war broke out in September 1939, *Labour Monthly* was printing 7,000 copies of each issue. By April of this year, despite all wartime difficulties—including a government ban on its export—circulation had jumped to over 30,000. As the journal of the whole left wing of British labor, the publication brings together a most unusual range of contributors. Trade union officials and intellectuals, Marxists and non-Marxists meet in its pages. Tom Mann, Willie Gallagher, Bernard Shaw, J. B. S. Haldane, Harold Laski, Harry Pollitt, and Sir Stafford Cripps have all written for it. So have Krupskaya, Barbusse, Marty, Nehru. From the United States have come articles by Earl Browder, William Z. Foster, and others.

Incisive, timely, uncompromising in its devotion to the interests of the British people, *Labour Monthly* is a vigorous spokesman for an international coalition of peoples and governments against Hitlerism. In the critical days that lie ahead, we look with confidence to its further progress and success.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

RECENT NEGRO FICTION

Ralph Ellison discusses the growing achievements of Negro novelists in depicting the consciousness of an oppressed nation. The second article in a series on "The Negro in American Life."

RECENT American Negro fiction has been marked by a slow but steady movement toward a grasp of American reality. In quantity it has been small; in quality it has ranged from works that echo the worst efforts of the "Harlem" writers of the twenties to the high artistry of *Native Son*. The trend of the best of this writing has been toward an improvement and modernization of technique and enlargement of theme. Unlike the fiction growing out of the New Negro movement, it has, for the most part, avoided exoticism and narrow Negro middle class ideals. It is more solid in that it evolves out of a deep inner compulsion rather than out of a shallow imitativeness; it strives to attain an organic place in the lives of the Negro people, and if less prolific than Negro postwar fiction it has been more full of the stuff of America.

American Negro fiction of the 1920's was timid of theme, and for the most part technically backward. Usually it was apologetic in tone and narrowly confined to the expression of Negro middle class ideals rather than those of the Negro working and agricultural masses. Except for the work of Langston Hughes it ignored the existence of Negro folklore and perceived no connection between its own efforts and the symbols and the images of Negro folk forms; it was oblivious of psychology; it was unconscious of politics; and most of the deeper problems arising out of the relationship borne by the Negro group to the larger North American whole were avoided. Not that it contained no protest; it did, but its protest was racial and narrowly nationalistic. Hughes' fiction, however, showed an awareness of the working class and socially dispossessed Negro and his connection with the international scheme of things. This fiction, expressing this broader consciousness of the Negro group through advanced techniques and drawing upon folklore for its sources, was thus more vital and enduring than the work of most of his contemporaries.

When the continuation of the fictional trend started by Hughes is sought in recent Negro fiction, one encounters Richard Wright's set of five short stories, *Uncle Tom's Children*. Taking for its characters Negro men and women at bay in the oppressive Southern environment, the book represents one of the few instances in which an American Negro writer has successfully delineated the universals embodied in Negro experience. The result is an imaginative exploration of Southern Negro types, from the simplest sharecropper struggling unconsciously in a world he does not understand, to men and women aware of their fate and approaching it through political conviction. They are three-dimensional people, possessing an emotional and psychological complexity never before achieved in American Negro writing.

In Wright's *Native Son* we have the first philosophical novel by an American Negro. This work possesses an artistry, penetration of thought, and sheer emotional power that places it into the front rank of American fiction. Indeed, except for its characters and subject matter, it seems hardly identifiable with previous Negro fiction; but this, however, only in a superficial sense concealing factors of vital importance to the understanding of Negro writing.

Native Son and *Uncle Tom's Children* express an artistic sensibility overcoming the social and cultural isolation of Negro life and moving into a world of unlimited intellectual and imaginative possibilities. The technical, artistic, and intellectual qualities of these works are a reflection and a result of this process. To understand this is to grasp many of the problems of Negro life and fiction.

WHILE CONSTITUTING ten percent of the total population, Negroes are left outside of most American institutions. They are confined to the black ghettoes of our large cities and they live in a Jim Crow world. They receive inferior wages, are restricted from participation in government throughout the country, and in most of the South they are not allowed to vote. The total effect of this discrimination has been to retard the Negro's penetration into American civilization. It has attempted to restrict him to the reflexes and responses of a peasant in the midst of the greatest industrial society in the world. During the past decade, to fight this discrimination, he has forged new instruments of struggle, and made alliances with labor and others in an effort to create a new society. In the South the Negro fights against a semi-feudal environment under an oppression reenforced by lynch mobs. There he possesses a fluid folk culture, for the most part unrecorded, and he has his own religion. In the North, although he enjoys a wider freedom of movement, he has sometimes been used as a strikebreaker, and until the CIO he was locked out of most of the trade unions. In the industrial North the Negro's folk culture became divided: there developed the shallow, imitative culture of the educated middle class Negro, and the partly urbanized, somewhat distorted folk culture found in Negro streets, slums, cabarets, and dance halls, and which now is becoming the basis of a new proletarian literature.

During the postwar period the first of these cultural divisions produced the New Negro movement and brought forth such writers as Countee Cullen, Rudolph Fisher, Zora Neil Hurston, Wallace Thurman, and Jessie Fauset, who expressed certain general ideas and tendencies which grew out of the postwar prosperity and the rise of a conscious Negro middle class. Aside from ignoring the folk source of all vital American Negro art, the fiction of this group was chiefly lyrical, and for the most part was unaware of the technical experimentation and direction being taken by American writing as the result of the work—itself a product and symptom of the breakup of a world—of such writers as Joyce, Stein, Anderson, and Hemingway. It was not addressed to Negro readers, but to a white audience that had recently "discovered" the Negro in its quest to make spiritual readjustments to a world in transition. Culturally this writing expressed the distortions wrought upon sensitive Negro personalities by American Jim Crow life. These writers were actually trying to establish contact with a world created by a boom period of capitalism, in which the realities and motive forces of society were obscured, and in which even their own difficult lives were thrown out of perspective in a rain of stocks, bonds, and dollar bills.

When the crash came, the vast distance between the real world and the illusion held by these Negro writers became manifest. Negro middle class ideals were swept away in the flood of unemployment, poverty, and the suppression of civil liberties brought on by the depression. Many American Negro writers ceased to write, and those who continued were faced with the problem of discovering new means of understanding the world and of analyzing its movements. Thus, under the sobering effect of the depression, Negro writing discovered the path mapped out by Langston Hughes: it became realistic. New techniques were used; new themes appeared, indicating a broader grasp of American reality and an awareness of the struggling Negro masses.

The depression years, the movement for relief, the rise of the CIO with the attending increases in union activity among Negroes, the Herndon and Scottsboro cases, the fight against the poll tax—all made for the emergence of a new proletarian consciousness among black people. Along with this came the Federal Arts Projects and the stimulus which they gave to Negro cultural activity.

And the Negro writer was not left unaffected. His was now a struggle to come to grips with and record those forces of the period that were moving the black workers and farmers to un-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

precedented activity. And it was here that the relative newness of American Negro fiction and the isolation of Negro middle class culture was experienced as a handicap. The grinding impact of the depression upon the aroused Negro people was transforming its folk consciousness into a working class awareness. Negro communities sprouted picket lines, and shouted slogans showing an awareness of the connection between world events and Negro lives. And the writer who had stood aloof from the people, confining himself to transmitting the small, thin, compromising voice of the black middle class, found himself drowned out in the mighty protesting roar of the black masses. And when the writer attempted to transmit this new sound it was as though he had encountered a strange language; it cracked the crude mechanism of his prose. Yet the speech patterns of this new language had long been present in Negro life, recorded in the crystallized protest of American Negro folklore. It was only that now this protest was receiving intensification and amplification as a result of the folk Negro's reaction to mechanized capitalist suffering: the pressure was bursting the shell of the Negro people's folk consciousness. It organized the National Negro Congress and the Southern Youth Congress for social struggle. It now demanded articulation through prose mediums capable of dealing with the complexities of the society in which its new consciousness struggled to be born.

In American Negro literature there existed no background for dealing with such problems as were now emerging. For literature is a product of social relations, and the black middle class—despite its favored position—hardly less than the Negro workers has been excluded from participation in those social institutions in which the consciousness necessary for dealing with such problems is to be formed; this literature had developed no techniques for grappling with the deeper American realities. In American literature this background was to be found in the work of such men as Dreiser and Upton Sinclair; but Jim Crow is intellectual as well as social and political, and the themes and problems with which these writers were concerned were not recognized by Negro writers as being related to American Negro experience.

Fortunately, the growth of working class activity and thought in American life found expression in the general trends of North American writing during the thirties. The technical discoveries of the twenties were bent to the new social themes and given a new synthesis; the concepts of American democracy and social justice were revitalized. Such writers' organizations as the John Reed Clubs and the League of American Writers attempted to give these trends conscious direction. They created centers of literary and cultural discussion which encouraged the emergence of the major fiction of 1939 and 1940.

Locked in his Jim Crow world, the average American Negro writer received the effects of these organizations at second-hand, by an almost unconscious act of absorption. For this reason, although recent American Negro fiction has shown new techniques and expressed new ideas, it has done so usually in a manner which revealed that the assumptions upon which the techniques were based, and the general working class world view from which the ideas derive, have not always been understood. What is positive here, however, is that even while still somewhat bare of sharp, universal implications, the best of this writing has presented a realistic effort to fulfill a vital function.

It is significant that most of the older writ-

Writers and the War

Following is the statement issued by the League of American Writers, calling for immediate aid to Great Britain and the Soviet Union. The League, which has 700 members, has addressed its statement to all writers and writers' organizations. A copy has been sent by airmail to Erskine Caldwell, a vice president of the League who is at present in Moscow, with a request that he transmit it to the Union of Soviet Writers. Copies have also gone to Sylvia Townsend Warner, who represented British writers at the League's Third American Congress in 1939, and to writers of China and Latin America.

An expression of solidarity in the fight against fascism has also been issued by 130 writers, scientists, educators, and artists—including three Nobel Prize winners—urging material assistance to the USSR, Great Britain, and China. Among the signers are Prof. Franz Boas, Ernest Boyd, Lin Yutang, Klaus Mann, Lion Feuchtwanger, Dr. Mary E. Woolley, Prof. Irving Fisher, Vilhjalmur Stefansson, Richard Wright, Rockwell Kent, William Gropper, James Montgomery Flagg, Louis Bromfield, Ida Tarbell, and Ben Hecht.

SINCE its inception in 1935, the League of American Writers has sought to preserve and promote the democratic traditions of our country by fostering a literature that springs from the lives and needs of the people. To this end the League has urged that the welfare of the American people requires participation in every genuine anti-fascist struggle—whether it be that of the Spanish people, the Chinese people, or the people of Germany.

When there was still peace in the world, we fought to maintain it. We called on American writers to support collective action by England, France, the United States, and the Soviet Union. We knew that such collective action would secure peace, and peace would be fatal to fascism. But at Munich, our people and our country suffered a great defeat. And out of Munich came a war which carried with it the same danger of defeat for the peoples of all countries, including our own. Made by the same men and forces that perpetrated Munich, the war did not win the confidence of our people. We were not persuaded that it was a genuine war against fascism.

But now the alliance between Great Britain and the Soviet Union provides the peoples of all countries with an unprecedented opportunity to rid the world of Hitlerism. And a world free of fascism is essential to the democratic institutions and culture of the United States. Therefore, the League advocates all immediate and necessary measures in support of Great Britain and the Soviet Union to insure the military defeat of the fascist aggressors. We believe such support has now become vital to the welfare and security of our country. We look forward to the release of our colleagues from the concentration camps of Europe, the return of exiled writers to their native land, and the extirpation of the gravest threat to our existence as free writers.

However, there are traitors in our country who seek to ally us not with the enemies of fascism but with Hitlerism itself. The American Quislings, led by Lindbergh, Hoover, Wheeler, and Coughlin, wish to strengthen Hitlerism at the expense of democracy everywhere—including American democracy. Their policy of appeasement led to the defeat of the Spanish Republic, the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia, and the downfall of France. It is the policy which would result in the destruction of our freedom. So also would attempts to use the struggle against Hitlerism for imperialist rivalries.

The fight against fascism cannot and must not be conducted at the expense of civil liberties, trade union rights, academic freedom, and living standards in the United States. Only a greater democratization of our economic, political, and cultural life will insure our triumph over Hitlerism. The League will continue with renewed vigor its opposition to censorship, and its efforts to provide more extensive outlets for anti-fascist literature. The League supports the full rights of labor, including the right to strike. It is unalterably opposed to anti-Semitism and discrimination against Negroes and the foreign born. The League believes it is essential that our Latin American neighbors be assured the same unequivocal freedom we advocate in other parts of the world.

Victory is in sight for mankind. The united effort of all anti-fascist writers in the United States and all other countries will hasten this victory. The free writers of the world will live to record the death of fascism.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Big Dollar's Worth!

Spur the anti-fascist fight by sending this issue of NM (or any issue, past and future) to your friends at the special rate of—

10 COPIES MAILED, ADDRESSED AND WRAPPED FOR $1
(single copies 15c)

Clip your dollar bill to this coupon and mail it to:

NEW MASSES
461 Fourth Ave., N. Y. C.

Gentlemen:
Enclosed find $1 for which please send your issue date_____ to the following:

Name _____
Address City State

Name _____
Address City State

Name _____
Address City State

Name _____
Address City State

Name _____
Address City State

Name _____
Address City State

Name _____
Address City State

Name _____
Address City State

Name _____
Address City State

Name _____
Address City State

Name _____
Address City State

8-5-41

ers have failed to produce any fiction since the early thirties, having either stopped writing completely, or having confined themselves to other forms. Scanning the fiction list for older writers, one discovers only the names of Arna Bontemps and Zora Neil Hurston. And since we are here concerned with new trends it is perhaps well that a brief summary deal with the recent work of these two writers first.

After his splendid pioneering contribution to historical fiction with *Black Thunder,* Arna Bontemps has followed through with *Drums at Dusk,* an historical romance. But while the first was a novel of importance, the second must be classed with such works as *Anthony Adverse.* Despite its projection against the background of the violent Haitian uprising of the 1790's, the focus of the novel is narrow; it possesses neither the technical qualities nor high seriousness of *Black Thunder,* and seems to terminate at the point where its main action should have begun. It is as though Bontemps stopped briefly to boil the pot while preparing more serious themes.

In her turn Zora Neil Hurston's latest work, though possessing technical competence, retains the blight of calculated burlesque that has marred most of her writing. *Their Eyes Were Watching God* tells the story of a Southern Negro woman's love-life against the background of an all-Negro town into which the casual brutalities of the South seldom intrude. Her next work, *Moses Man of the Mountains,* a fictional biography, is presented as the American Negro's conception of the life of Moses. Taking the Hebraic legend which presents Moses as giver of laws, Miss Hurston gives us Moses as conjureman. This work sets out to do for Moses what *The Green Pastures* did for Jehovah; for Negro fiction it did nothing.

Turning from the older writers to the new, the scene brightens. In his first novel, *These Low Grounds,* Waters Edward Turpin has written of a Negro family, depicting its evolution by generations through several periods of the country's growth. In *O Canaan,* Turpin has treated the great migration which, during the first world war period, brought thousands of folk Negroes from the agricultural South to the industrial centers of the North. These are new directions in American Negro fiction, the very selection of which bespeaks a new awareness in Negro writing. But Turpin's handling of his material betrays that this awareness has not been organized around a clearly defined set of assumptions; he seems to have drawn no clear-cut conclusions about the role of the Negro in American life. And symptomatic of all this is Turpin's tendency to cling to obsolete technical devices. In the sense that a technique is both a reflection and an instrument of consciousness, Turpin's relation to his material is that of an obstretrician attempting with obsolete instruments to aid a birth he sees only cloudily through blurred vision. The new consciousness of the Negro people struggles to be born: Turpin has approached it, thus far, with faltering hands and near-sighted eyes. The positive thing, however, is that he has approached it.

In a sense, this is also true of William Attaway, whose first novel, *Let Me Breathe Thunder,* while promising important works to follow, relates the adventures of white boys-of-the-road—in itself no criticism—leaving the themes of Negro experience for later consideration. Attaway has shown an understanding of the aims of modern writing; there remains the harder, truly creative task of gearing his prose to Negro theme and emotion.

The general effect of these novels is one of incompleteness; something is not fully formed in them. And when American Negro magazine fiction is examined, it is seen that the division between the themes of which the writer is becoming aware, and the techniques necessary to give them dynamic treatment, is quite deep. Viewed from the problem of consciousness, it seems that this division is traceable to the Jim Crow retardation of the natural flow of the Negro folk consciousness into the machines and institutions which constitute the organism of North American society; it presents a socio-political problem. And until some organized effort is made to resolve this division, by stepping out ahead of the slowly changing economic and social reality and, by clarifying Negro consciousness, accelerating the tempo of the Negro people's efforts in effecting that change, it is a division that will heal but slowly. This will mean of course far more than attaining the consciousness of the American bourgeois, for the institutional support of bourgeois consciousness is rapidly disintegrating under the pressure of capitalism's decay. The new Negro consciousness must of necessity go beyond the highest point of bourgeois consciousness and work toward the creation of conditions in which it might integrate and stabilize itself; it demands new institutions, a new society.

In the work of Richard Wright we have a hint of how, through imagination and conscious artistry, the American Negro writer as an individual might overcome the limitations imposed upon him. And it is when we examine *Native Son* and *Uncle Tom's Children* against the background of the above listed fiction, that we see the full effect that political and cultural segregation has had upon Negro writing. In his monograph, *How Bigger Was Born,* Wright makes an attempt to explain how he came to possess the sensibility out of which he produced *Native Son.* As a member of the Chicago John Reed Club he encountered attitudes, assumptions, and aims toward American civilization that were inarticulate in the Negro's folk consciousness. He explains:

> I met white writers who talked of their responses, who told me how whites reacted to this lurid American scene. And as they talked I'd translate what they said in terms of Bigger's life. But what was more important still, I read their novels. Here, for the first time, I found ways and techniques of gauging meaningfully the effects of American civilization upon the personalities of people. I took these techniques, these ways of seeing and feeling and twisted them, bent them, adapted them, until

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

they became *my* ways of apprehending the locked-in life of the Black Belt areas. This association with white writers was the life preserver of my hope to depict Negro life in fiction, for my race possessed no fictional background in such sharp and critical testing of experience, no novels that went with a deep and fearless will down to the dark roots of life.

And when Wright wrote, his fiction showed a maturity possessed by few American novels. But one very important factor is omitted here: that of the effect upon Wright of his participation in an organization (the Chicago John Reed Club) concerned with all of the intense issues affecting American life and which profoundly influenced the flow of American events. Wright, through exercising his function as secretary of that organization, and, through his personal responsibility, forcing himself to come to grips with these issues and making decisions upon them, built up within himself tensions and disciplines which were impossible within the relaxed, semi-peasant environs of American Negro life. This mounted almost to the attainment of a new sensibility, of a rebirth. For the writer it was an achievement equal only to the attainment of positions of advanced trade union leadership by Negro workers. Contradicting the whole Jim Crow system, it postulated the existence of a group whose vision rejected the status quo. *Native Son,* examined against past Negro fiction, represents the take-off in a leap which promises to carry over a whole tradition, and marks the merging of the imaginative depiction of American Negro life into the broad stream of American literature. For the Negro writer it has suggested a path which he might follow to reach maturity, clarifying and increasing his social responsibility. The writer is faced with the problem of mastering the culture of American civilization through the techniques and disciplines provided by his art —a process that constitutes a leap into the possession of a physiological, emotional, and intellectual discipline, which usually is only to be attained through the unlimited freedom provided by ownership of the means of production. The writer's responsibility is greater because this is a difficult and necessary achievement if his people are to fight their battle with any sense of equal preparation. It is no accident that the two most advanced American Negro writers, Hughes and Wright, have been men who have *experienced freedom of* association with advanced white writers (not because the men from whom they have learned were unique because of their whiteness, but because in the United States even the possession of Western culture is controlled on the basis of color). Nor is it an accident that Hughes and Wright have had, as writers of fiction, the greatest effect upon Negro life.

In their broader implications, the problems of American Negro fiction are not problems of the Negro writer alone. They are the problems of all who are interested in the defense of American culture. Working class and political thinkers have shown an increasing awareness of the great American social and

CRITICS' PRIZE PLAY 1941

"WATCH ON THE RHINE"
LILLIAN HELLMAN'S New Play
with
LUCILE WATSON • PAUL LUKAS • MADY CHRISTIANS
MARTIN BECK THEATRE
W. 45 St. — Air-Conditioned
Evgs. 8:40. Mats. Wed. & Sat.

HERMAN SHUMLIN presents his
2
PRIZE-WINNING HITS

ETHEL BARRYMORE
"THE CORN IS GREEN"
By EMLYN WILLIAMS
NATIONAL THEATRE
W. 41 St. Evgs. 8:40 — Air-Conditioned
No Mon. Perfs. Mats. Wed., Thurs. & Sat.

CRITICS' PRIZE PLAY 1941

"A HONEY OF A SHOW"
—Walter Winchell
MY SISTER EILEEN
The Riotous Laugh Hit
BILTMORE THEATRE
47th St. West of B'way. CI 6-9353
Evgs. 8:40. Mats. Wed. & Sat., 2:40
AIR CONDITIONED

HOLD-OVER — SECOND BIG WEEK
Why Hitler will fail! See the great picture
SOVIET FRONTIERS on the DANUBE
and Annabella in
HOTEL du NORD with Louis Jouvet
Also Soviet shorts & latest newsreels. Cont. from 10:30 A.M. till Midnight—15c to 2 P.M., 20c to 6 P.M. weekdays
IRVING PLACE THEATRE—Irving Place at 14th St.
Benefit Block Tickets at Reduced Prices GR 5-4049

America's Biggest Nickel Buy

NOW READY

"No work on Russia has impressed me as much as this."—Theodore Dreiser.

The SOVIET* POWER

by The Very Reverend
Doctor Hewlitt Johnson
Dean of Canterbury

*A full length ILLUSTRATED Book. 1,000,000 copy edition.

5¢

Let us mail copies of this thrilling, honest book to your friends and shopmates. Send US the list of names, enclosed with a check or money-order . . . we will mail them for you at seven cents ($.07) each or 15 copies for $1.00.

Bulk orders 20 copies for $1.00

(No charge for postage if mailed to one address)

WORKERS BOOK SHOP
50 East 13th Street, New York City

BEHIND THE BARBED WIRE
six songs of the concentration camp
Directed by Earl Robinson
". . . Songs Sung Wherever Men Strive for Liberty."
Alvah Bessie—New Masses
Bart van der Schelling—baritone
Official singer International Brigade
and the Exiles chorus
3—10" records & album $2.75
On sale at
LEAGUE OF AMERICAN WRITERS
381—4th Ave. MU 6-8790

Announcement

Another book of Mike Quin's poems, topical essays, humorous sketches and jingles is off the press.

More "Dangerous Thoughts"

By Mike Quin

With an Introduction by Theodore Dreiser
160 pages of supreme reading entertainment

You can get your copy of More "Dangerous Thoughts" by writing directly to The People's World, 583 Market Street, San Francisco, Calif., and enclosing 50 cents in coin or stamps. Cloth bound edition is $1.25.

SUMMER RATES
LOOK YOUR SUMMER BEST REDUCED RATES NOW
12 complete visits* (regularly 10 for $27.00) $25.00
22 complete visits* (regularly 20 for $45.00) $40.00

*INCLUDES — Swedish Massage — Vapor Baths — Individual Exercise — Posture Correction — Open Roof Facilities — Handball — Paddle Tennis — Ping Pong — Solarium — Body Building — Vibrators — Electric Barrels — Bicycles — Tennis Instruction, etc.

Goodwin's Gym

20 Visits Special, no massage..... $25.00
12 Visits Special, one month gym course..... 10.00
Complete Trial Visit..... 2.00
1457 Broadway at 42nd Street
On the Roof — Wisconsin 7-8250 — Women Only

SALESMEN WANTED BY NEW MASSES

to sell the magazine at lectures, meetings, busy street corners, etc. Liberal commissions enable energetic sellers to earn substantial sums weekly.

Apply: Promotion Director, NEW MASSES, 461 Fourth Avenue

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

GREEN MANSIONS welcomes you to its new theatre, lounge, cocktail bar, sun-decks. Log Cabin Clubhouse, each room with private bath. Private golf course, lake, 13 championship tennis courts, all on premises.

LENA BARISH: SAM GARLEN
Directors

N. Y. C. office: 11 W. 42nd St.
Telephone: BRyant 9-1738

Write for Booklet NM

Green Mansions

In the Adirondacks-WARRENSBURG, N. Y.

CAMP LAKELAND

on Sylvan Lake
Hopewell Junction, N. Y.
For a
Balanced Vacation
Action Aplenty: Tennis, Handball, Swimming, Archery, Rowing, Track, Basketball.
Entertainment: Oscar Smith and his Keynoters, B'way shows and reviews nightly, Stars of theatre.
Easy Living: Large, Comfortable Accommodations, Excellent Food. Chambermaid Service.
$19.50 per week
$3.50 per day

Cars leave daily from 2700 Bronx Park East. For transportation call OLmville 5-8639.
City office: 80 Fifth Ave. GR 5-2983

Indescribably Beautiful!

Here's Plum Point! 70 acres of heaven tumbling down to the Hudson . . . with rose gardens and rare trees . . . with every sport . . . with informal entertainment, arts and crafts . . . a huge musical library . . . *Attractive Rates. Booklet on Request.*

PLUM POINT
the-year-round-vacation-resort
New Windsor, N.Y. Newburgh 4270

FARM HOTEL

Only 65 miles from the City amidst magnificent Candlewood Lake and Berkshire Hills. Swimming, tennis on premises. Free boating. Hot-Cold running water. Showers. Russian-American Kitchen. Children accommodated. $4.00 per day. $22.50 per week. Special family rates. For free booklet and reservations write to STANLEY LAPINSKY, BARLOW FARM, SHERMAN, CONN., or call New Milford 756-J-3.

The Woodlands

FOR THE SPIRITED: Tennis — Handball — Swimming — Badminton — Pingpong — Archery — Mountain trails — Croquet — Culinary Masterpieces — Fishing — Boating.
FOR THE LAZYBONES: Well-stocked Library — Art Classes — Crafts — Dark Room — Musical Recordings — Open Fireplaces — Spectacular Country.
Rates $25—$27.50 per week
SIGGIE GOLDNER, PHOENICIA, NEW YORK

political forces that pivot on the Negro group. The Negro vote figures prominently in national elections, and the outcome of many recent labor struggles has depended upon the stand taken by Negro workers. Usually the workers have been with the unions. Interesting in this connection is the recent incident at the Ford River Rouge Plant, where although Negro unionists and the majority of the Negro community supported the strike, a group of Negro underworld characters were used in Ford's fascist-like attempts to break the union, revealing one instance of how demoralized and culturally dispossessed Negroes might be used by an American fascism.

Today the Negro people are struggling in a world chaotic with reaction and war. They are struggling under a handicap because they have been historically denied opportunities to become conditioned in working class methods of organized struggle. It thus becomes the task of fiction to help them overcome this handicap and to possess the conscious meaning of their lives.

These are difficult times for all writers: there is the threat of official and unofficial censorship: publishing difficulties and general economic problems. But if these times are difficult for the writer, they are great times for literature. These are times when the laws of society are laid bare for all who would understand to see; when emotions are to be observed stripped naked. For the conscious writer these are times for intense study; times, for those who see beyond the present chaos, of great themes. The Negro writer's task is to steep his sensibilities in a multiplicity of happenings, to create, as it were, a storehouse of emotional and intellectual insights to be transformed into the art of the future. Negro writers must work hard and with unfaltering faith in the face of the difficulties to come. For these difficulties shall create the themes for the American Negro fiction of tomorrow.

There must be no stepping away from the artistic and social achievements of *Native Son* if the Negro writer is to create the consciousness of his oppressed nation. And in answer to the old theory that publishers will not accept honest Negro writing, there again stands *Native Son*. The solution of the problem of publication seems to lie, partly, in the mastery of life through the mastery of the intense ways of thinking and feeling that are artistic techniques. This also is the answer to the social effectiveness and growth of American Negro fiction.

RALPH ELLISON.

Fable and Paradox

THE TRANSPOSED HEADS, *a Legend of India by Thomas Mann. Alfred A. Knopf. $2.*

IT IS altogether proper that the past should provide the material for an art that casts light upon the present in which the writer dwells. But has Mann really done anything like this with the remote legendary material of India? The original form of this little tale was obvious and simple. It was a fable, a moral tale, with a specifically conditioned social point. Under Thomas Mann's hand it becomes something else indeed—a finger exercise in paradoxes, an ironist's gymnastic in subtlety.

In the old story there were two youths—Nanda and Shridaman—the one a jolly child of the senses, the other an ascetic student of the Vedas. They are friends precisely because each loves what he lacks. (This, says Mann, is the basis of our striving for the beautiful—that we may never possess it ourselves.) They both desire Sita of the Beautiful Hips, although it is only Shridaman, the fellow with the headpiece, who gets her as a wife.

The symbolizations are obvious. But we may pause to ask why this twentieth century novelist is interested in an abstract dialogue of body and soul. Why has he found the highly dualistic Brahman philosophy so congenial, product as it was of a profoundly oppressive class relationship between a conquering Aryan social group and a primordial Dravidian populace? Of what relevance to our times is this transposed parable which sees the world divided into rigid castes of reality, the eternally separate material and spiritual, the Nanda and Shridaman components that strive to possess life—or Sita? It is curious also to observe how the realistic descriptions of these two symbolic figures correspond with the ancient but familiar social distinctions. Shridaman is light of skin with prominent nose and aristocratic ways—an obvious Aryan. Nanda, while no Sudra is definitely of lower social origin, is dark-skinned, goat-nosed, the Dravidian man of the people.

The fable continues. Sita naturally loves both men—she loves both mind and flesh. This leads in time to complications so distressing that one fine day the two young men hew off their heads in a wayside temple. The goddess of the temple gives the young wife the power to reattach the heads of both husband and friend. And here the transposition occurs. For somehow the clerkly head of the husband is skewered onto the sturdy outdoor body of the friend and Nanda's ordinary noggin is fastened to the second-rate appendages of Shridaman. Who is now the lady's husband? The old story decided firmly in favor of the man with the husband's head who is now composed of the most excellent features of both. But here Mann takes up his sequel. It seems that no facile transpositions can save us from life's fundamental dichotomy. We find the husband slowly sloughing off the athletic muscles and sensuous habits of his new body while its former owner, in his loneliness, builds up the priestly limbs he has acquired till he is almost the old Nanda again. And Sita, the reconciling principle of life, would again love them both—and cannot love one alone. So, says Mann in effect, the problem is insoluble. Spirit and body are complementary but never integral. On the other hand, division is fatal. Our three friends must end up on a mutual funeral pyre.

My first response to this devious episode was that it was concerned with an amazingly abstract conundrum, and that our drawing a blank at the end was the logical conclusion to

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

so academic a diversion. In the real world more pressing problems demand answers. Why has Mann chosen to write a fable that has no moral, carrying his customary irony to its logical extreme so that he presents us with a deeply cynical viewpoint—a viewpoint in which there are never any simple essences, but only incessant ambivalence and confusion?

Something of this same impulse is inherent in Mann's use of Egyptian mythology in the weighty volumes of the Joseph series. In this larger work the simple biblical narrative is heavily surmounted by layers and layers of symbolism drawn from Egyptian and Babylonian legend. Now it can be noted that in any immensely scaled civilization such as that of Egypt or India, the historical accumulation of tradition gives rise to a many-tiered series of religious meanings for every simple act. We find the Egyptians themselves, for instance, making an exaggerated use of verbal puns and multiple meanings in their writings just because they had so many images for every literal observation. But in a modern writer the adoption of such a method becomes the sheerest sophistication. The search for a multiple truth becomes a confession that there is never a single, certain truth. As for Joyce, in an entirely different way, the word is no longer a tool or an effectual weapon but the reflective center of many radiating suggestions. And for Mann, even in this small piece as in the larger work to which it is related, this technique becomes a learned eclecticism, a voluptuizing of the literary form of allegory which was once designed to dramatize rather than to obscure distinctions of meaning.

So, in *The Transposed Heads* we are presented with the essential comparison to which eclecticism reduces itself either in philosophy or life. Marx once characterized the petty-bourgeois as "composed of On the One Hand and On the Other Hand," adding that "if he is in addition a gifted man, he will soon learn to play with his own contradictions and develop them, according to circumstances, into striking, ostentatious, now scandalous, now brilliant paradoxes." And we can summon these words as an interesting judgment upon much of Mann's later career, even from the vantage point of this minor work.

MILLICENT LANG.

Brief Review

THE NEW AMERICAN. *A Handbook of Necessary Information for Aliens, Refugees, and New Citizens, edited by Francis Kalnay and Richard Collins. Greenberg. $2.*

The editors of this handbook have done a useful and intelligent job. Cognizant of the hundreds of problems faced by the refugee or immigrant today, they have tried to answer almost every question that might occur to him, whether it concerns his status, his civil rights, or his chances of employment and the organization specifically devoted to his interests. Locating relatives here and in Europe, how to become a citizen, workmen's compensation, are among the many categories dealt with.

TRIPLE LAKE RANCH
EVERYBODY'S "DUDE-ING" IT
ROUND-UP of Vacation Thrills
REAL WESTERN HOUSE PARTY
TRIPLE { Enjoyment / Value / Lake
• Riding & Instruction Free • Horses Aplenty
• 75 Miles of Private Trails • FREE GOLF
• Championship Tennis & Handball Courts
• Tops in ALL Sports • Swimming
• Congenial Companions • Home Comforts
• Excellent Food • 5th Successful Year
• OUTDOOR DANCING • Cowboy Band
• Informal Entertainment • Altitude 1000 ft.
• Scenic Grandeur 37 Miles from N. Y. C.
Western Spirit and Romance at your Doorstep
N. Y. Tel. TR 5-2163 Ask for Booklet
SUCCASUNNA, N. J. ANNE BARASH, MGR.

There is something new in camps. Luxurious — charming — spacious — magnificent — yet simplicity prevails — no ostentation.
CAMP COLEBROOK
COLEBROOK RIVER, CONN.
DIANA & ABE BERMAN, formerly of Uncas Lodge, are pleased to announce their new location in the center of the Berkshires, alt. 1500, formerly an exclusive country club.
• Beautiful mountain lake, surrounded by 320 acres of pines, hemlocks, poplars, etc.
• Artistic lodges—facing lake—beautifully landscaped, each with fieldstone fireplace.
• Excellent clay tennis courts and new cement handball courts.
• Ping-pong, croquet green, archery, baseball field.
• Orchestra and social activities.

AUGUST RATES $27.50 & UP
N. Y. Phone — AL 4-0063

CAMP ANNISQUAM
ABRAM RESNICK
Director
Gloucester, Mass.
Charming
UNPRETENTIOUS on picturesque bay at Gloucester—fine spirit, whole-hearted direction. All land and sea sports. Send for booklet.

Camp Followers of the Trail
Offers its facilities for a pleasant vacation
Tennis — Handball — Baseball — Swimming — Dancing — Entertainment — Delicious Food — Friendly Atmosphere — $17.00 per week
Buchanan, N. Y. Tel. Peekskill 2879

HISTORY BY CABLE . . .
How is the war going? NEW MASSES presents exclusive cable reports from the front lines.
From Moscow by Ilya Ehrenbourg, Eugene Petrov and others.
From London by R. Palme Dutt, Claude Cockburn.
FOR THE $5,000 CABLE FUND
NEW MASSES
461 4th Avenue
New York, N. Y.
Gentlemen:
I enclose $_____ as my donation to the NEW MASSES cable fund.
Name_____
Address_____
City and State_____
8-5-41

FAST TENNIS COURTS • BADMINTON • HANDBALL • BOATING • BASEBALL • TABLE TENNIS • ARCHERY • RIDING • SWIMMING • BASKETBALL • FISHING • DANCING • RECORDINGS
Escape TO HEAVEN
For moderns with a hankering for all the joyful sports, spectacular landscapes, yumyum menus and the best of music to dance or read to, the word for vacationtime is—Allaben. Sparkling entertainment by a corps of Geniuses. Comfortable quarters. *For Everything* — per week $23.50 — $25.00 — $27.50.
Write or 'phone for new folder.
N. Y. OFFICE: 55 W. 42 ST. (LO 5-4685)
ALLABEN ACRES
ALLABEN, N. Y.
(Tel. PHOENICIA 75)
THE INFORMAL ADULT CAMP
SWING "NAME BAND" • GAY COMPANY • DRAMA

HILLTOP Lodge
ON BEAUTIFUL SYLVAN LAKE
R. R. Station: Pawling, N. Y.
Tel.: Hopewell Junction 2781
Only 65 Miles from N. Y. C.
EVERY CONCEIVABLE SPORT & RECREATION
GOLF FREE ON PREMISES
Tennis • Night Tennis • Handball • Swimming • Boating • Horseback Baseball • Cycling, etc.
SOCIAL AND ATHLETIC STAFFS
Our Food is Tops!
RATES $24.50 per week
WEEK-ENDS $5.00 per day
Under Direction of—
PAUL WOLFSON & SOL ROTHAUSER
N. Y. Office: 170 Broadway
Tel.: COrtlandt 7-3958
HOPEWELL JUNCTION, N.Y.

CENTRAL VALLEY N. Y.
Birdland
Formerly Lewisohn's Estate — Open All Year
One hour from N. Y. 225 acres of fascinating hiking country. Sports: fast tennis courts, handball, swimming, bicycling, golf, horseback. Indoors: Ping Pong, games, recordings, library, dancing, exceptional company, excellent cuisine. Every comfort. Incomparable surroundings.
(Tel. Highland Mills 7895) Your Hostess: Fannie Goldberg

ARCADIA YOUR YEAR 'ROUND RESORT
FISHKILL, N. Y.
1100 acre estate. Spacious, comfortably furnished rooms, fully heated for chilly nights. Indoor and outdoor sports including tennis, swimming, handball, bicycling, ping-pong, etc. Symphonic and dance recordings, cozy library and lounge. Unexcelled cuisine. Inquire for seasonal rates or extended stay.
Phone: Beacon 727 R. R. Station: Beacon, New York

Enjoy your vacation at
EAGER ROSE GARDEN
BUSHVILLE, N. Y. Betw. MONTICELLO and FERNDALE
Prominent Artists
• Music and entertainment.
• All sports. Social activities.
• Make reservations early.
Attractive rate for August
PHONE GR 5-3714
OR MONTICELLO 371

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE MOVIES: STERN, GAY, AND OTHERWISE

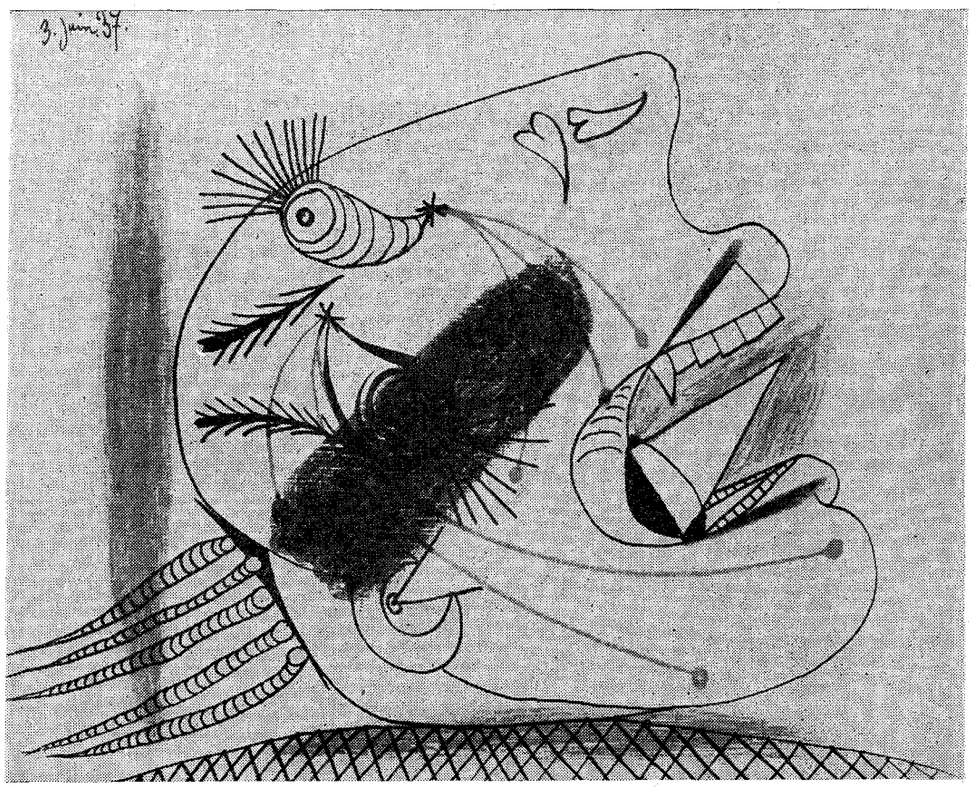
Alvah Bessie reviews the progressive film, "The Stars Look Down," while Joy Davidman comments on Bette Davis as comedienne . . . "I Hear America Singing," in album of recordings.

"THE STARS LOOK DOWN" is a British film which lay in Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer's vaults for over a year and a half after its arrival in America. Metro did not want to release it and, ironically enough, it was not a progressive group that forced its release, but some people outside MGM who had an interest in American box-office receipts. If you will go to the Criterion Theater, where the movie is showing under a false banner of meretricious advertising lines—such as "See How the Best of Men Can Be Ruined by the Worst of Women"—you will see one of the most powerful progressive films of our time.

The story is from Dr. A. J. Cronin's novel about coal miners in the north of England. Dr. Cronin is a competent commercial hack, who occasionally makes use of themes that carry inherent power in the nature of their subject matter (*Hatter's Castle* did a neat job of exposing complacency and worse in the medical profession). *The Stars Look Down* is a very simple story of the lives of the men who work the pits.

The story's motivation lies in the imminent danger to which these men are exposed by working a shaft that might be flooded at any moment. The reason why they are working under such conditions is plain to the simplest mind: the mine operator wants to make money, and he is willing to take a chance on killing his men and flooding his mine. A plan of this mine exists, but he denies it. A leading miner induces his fellows to strike, but the strike is starved out by the usual methods; the leaders are imprisoned on framed charges; the men, their families starving and their bureaucratic union officers refusing to back them, return to the dangerous pit. The catastrophe that has been inevitable from the start overwhelms them. Men are drowned, burned to death in underground fires, torn to pieces by the explosion of the lurking gases. It is too late to do anything, although heroic efforts are made to rescue them, the mine operator himself participating.

The Stars Look Down has one theme extremely dangerous to the uninformed and propaganda-barraged audience. That is the picture it gives of the union officials who refuse to support their membership when it goes on strike. They are hide-bound reactionaries, who cherish their fat jobs and have forgotten that they themselves rose from the mines to positions of "leadership." They inevitably side with the employer, and refuse to heed the pleas of the leading miner's son when he urges them to take action before it is too late.



ONE OF THE GUERNICA DRAWINGS *being shown currently in the Picasso exhibit at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City.*

We do not need to be told that a few cases of such union "leadership" exist—but we know, also, that the militant rank and file will eventually eliminate them. The movie audience, however, which is told time and again by non-labor newspapers that unions are rackets and their leaders racketeers, will find nothing in *The Stars Look Down* to indicate that this type of union is the exception, not the rule. This aspect of the film cannot be too vehemently condemned.

At the same time the major part of *The Stars Look Down* constitutes one of the most powerful indictments of human greed—the greed of private ownership—that we have been privileged to see. The film is unequivocal in its demand for nationalization of the country's natural resources. It is emphatic in its portrayal of these people as they actually are —decent, hard-working men and women, brave with the indomitable courage of the proletariat everywhere; humorous and stoical; deeply emotional and reverential of human life; loving and hating.

The film's direction by Carol Reed *(Night Train)* is simple, restrained, brilliantly integrated. The performances by Michael Redgrave, Margaret Lockwood, Emlyn Williams, Nancy Price, and Edward Rigby assume dignity and power from the richness of the human material with which they are working.

THERE IS no review in this issue of Walt Disney's *The Reluctant Dragon,* for good and sufficient reason—the RKO Palace in New York is being picketed by friends and supporters of the striking Screen Cartoonists Guild. When Disney meets with and satisfies the demands of his employees, we will be delighted to review *The Reluctant Dragon.*

ALVAH BESSIE.

★

REMEMBER the old one where hero and heroine are trapped in the abandoned mine? Death leers from corners; the light flickers feebly; he and she stiffen their upper lips; the audience shudders. This thrilling moment has been the standby of several thousand Hollywood melodramas. It remained for *The Bride Came COD* to turn it into one of the funniest sequences in history.

Aware that audiences love to watch Bette Davis suffer, the Warner boys have given

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the poor girl the works in her latest film. They hit her with everything from a cactus to a tenor. The result is an irreverent and merry knockabout farce which gets fun out of millionaires, debutantes, love and kisses, stiff upper lips, and even Hollywood conventions. The menace is a better man with his fists than the hero, and a passionate embrace is ruined when Bette tastes mustard on Jimmy Cagney's lips.

As a goopy rich girl who wants to elope with a night-club tenor, Miss Davis is taken for a ride which surpasses, in sheer physical anguish, anything that ever happened to her in *The Letter* and *The Old Maid*. In the course of her elopement our rich heroine runs into an aviator with a mortgaged plane, and trouble starts immediately, culminating in the mine episode wherein Miss Davis bravely faces the death that isn't there, and in Mr. Cagney's getting smeared all over the desert when he fights heroically for his lady. It would be unkind to tell you more.

There is a joyous naturalness in Miss Davis' antics which is only too rare in film farce. James Cagney runs her a close second; and there are merry supporting performances by Stuart Erwin, Eugene Pallette, and Harry Davenport; but in spite of the adroitness of its acting *The Bride Came COD* is primarily a director's picture. Beautifully timed, ingeniously photographed without elaborate trickery, it achieves real distinction of style in such matters as the transition sequence which spreads the news of the heiress' imaginary kidnapping. Someone with a sense of humor did the musical score, too.

BROTHERS, do you remember the old shell game? You play it with three walnut shells and a pea; the gambler gets your money and you don't even get the nuts. A modified shell game is the high spot of *In the Navy,* which stars Abbott and Costello with sweet interludes of Dick Powell. In the Navy, it appears, they play the shell game with three tins and a lemon.

The other shell game, in which you shell out your money at the box office and then try to find the entertainment that isn't there, goes merrily on, these hot days, with films like *In the Navy*. The pretentious dullness of such "serious" pictures as *I Wanted Wings* has proved unpopular, so producers have fallen back on a familiar comic formula. They photograph a few battleships, pick a nautical title, then give you Minsky's burlesque with its face (and other things) slightly lifted.

The battleship of *In the Navy* is merely a background for a hot number with dancing and Mr. Powell's melodious gurgle, and you can't imagine how pretty an armored cruiser looks festooned with strings of colored lights. In spite of all this silliness, there is some genuine fun in the antics of Abbott and Costello. The way they look in gobs' uniforms is delectable in itself, and their habit of getting seasick while practicing rowing on land is positively touching. They are not, however, good enough to carry an entire film, and the problem of filling in the gaps has been too much for the rest of the company. We are asked to believe that Mr. Powell, as a radio crooner, wants privacy; that he tries to find it in the Navy, and that pretty Claire Dodd follows him from battleship to battleship with a conspicuous camera.

But, of course, you are not expected to believe *In the Navy*. You are merely expected to laugh; and the cast devotes enough energy to laugh-getting to power a blitzkrieg. At times you are reminded of the old silent films in which imperfect technique made everyone seem to revolve at windmill speed. This violent physical activity would not be so bad if it were not accompanied by an equally violent barrage of sound. *In the Navy* begins by playing "Anchors Aweigh" three times through in a steady fortissimo, picks up volume with the rancid honey of Dick Powell's voice, and ends by making you think you'd prefer the blitzkrieg. A blitzkrieg doesn't have the Andrews Sisters. All the same *In the Navy* isn't half as dull as *I Wanted Wings*.

"THEY MET IN BOMBAY" began well enough as a small tale of two jewel thieves who rob each other and love each other. Now Clark Gable could have my pearls any time (they being Woolworth) and Rosalind Russell makes a glamorous fake countess, though it's a waste of the screen's most brilliant lady satirist. But when two pleasant crooks turn noble on you, save the British empire, receive the Victoria Cross, and go off to prison with a prayer on their lips, it is just not believable. The boys simply tried to do too much with *They Met in Bombay*. They even threw in the Burma Road (i.e., a twisty section of Coldwater Canyon) to keep up with the newsreels. The best one can say about *They Met in Bombay* is that a uniform shows off Mr. Gable's figure to advantage. Indeed, the writers of the picture seem to have been aware of its hopelessness; they have shirked unscrambling the mess by any sort of logic. An unrepentant Mr. Gable goes out for a ride with Miss Russell and comes back an hour later, a reformed man. It wouldn't affect any man we know that way.

There isn't any direction, and there isn't any photography—except of Rosalind Russell's gowns. There is, however, the unfailingly admirable Peter Lorre in a small part, slimy as pond scum. God bless the movie villains; they keep poor reviewers alive.

JOY DAVIDMAN.

Whitman Cantata

Record album of "I Hear America Singing."

WALT WHITMAN'S sonorous verse has inspired many composers to set him to music, but until young George Kleinsinger began work on his Whitman cantata three years ago, few had produced more than high school choir works. Now Victor presents an

SWIMMING · TENNIS · BICYCLING · HORSEBACK · SOCIAL STAFF

NO TIME ON YOUR HANDS

If you want to relax alone, 300 wooded acres, if not—tennis at its best on 4 fast clay courts — a private lake and swimming pool — 2 badminton courts — handball — bicycling — 25 other outdoor and indoor sports, including photo darkroom and instruction. Sparkling entertainment by a brilliant Theatre Group. Dancing. Good food, fine company — modern quarters. Rates: $25 to $35.

N. Y. OFFICE: 55 WEST 42nd STREET, Tel. LO 5-5857

Write or phone for illustrated folder

A DELIGHTFUL HIDEAWAY IN THE MOUNTAINS

CHESTERS ZUNBARG

WOODBOURNE, N.Y. Tel. WOODBOURNE 1150

STAY AND PLAY AT:

MAUD'S SUMMER-RAY

North Branch, Sull. Co., N. Y.
Tel. Callicoon 95

Private Lake, All Sports, Dancing, Dramatics, Marionettes, Musicales, Rumba Bar. Broadway Theatre Artists

THRIFTY RATES
Erie R. R. to Callicoon

Private Car Service Daily — Daily Buses Direct From Bronx — Brooklyn — Manhattan, Midtown Bus Terminal, 43rd St. bet. Broadway & 6th Ave.
BRyant 9-3800 City Information: DIckens 2-5786

Most enchantingly beautiful spot in the Catskills
Far off the beaten path. Elevation 2500 ft.

HILLCREST

On Beaverkill Lake

Livingston Manor R. R. Station UNION GROVE, N. Y.

Phone Livingston Manor 218J11

Delightful mile-long lake at your door
All outdoor sports — free on the premises
No social staff. Fine American-Jewish meals
July and August — $18, $20, $22 per week

Telegraph—Hillcrest,
Livingston Manor, N. Y.

HARMONY COUNTRY CLUB
ON LAKE ANAWANA, HURLEYVILLE, N. Y.

- New $10,000 Athletic Field
- Private Lake
- Swimming
- Solariums
- Music Hall Concerts
- Shows Nightly
- Dancing

Monticello 711 *City Phone DIckens 6-5273*

AN *ARTIST INVITES YOU

to...his 100 acre farm
...glorious country
...superlative cooking
...informal entertainment
...barn dances, all sports
...55 miles from N. Y.

Limited accommodations; low rates
From $18 wkly; $3.50-$4.00 daily
* GEORGE A. PODORSON
250 Park Ave., N. Y. C. Phone: PLaza 3-8926
or Locust Grove Farm, Sylvan Lake, Hopewell Junction, N. Y.

CAMP BEACON Beacon 731
BEACON, N. Y.

BOATING & ALL SPORTS

Transportation
Phone OI 5-8639

$18 per week
$3.50 per day

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE MUSIC ROOM
presents on
KEYNOTE RECORDS

A New Release!
Song for HARRY BRIDGES
sung by the ALMANAC SINGERS
K 304 ..... $.50

Talking Union
an album of six union songs
The first album of its kind. Dedicated to the memory of Joe Hill.
3 — 10" records in album — $2.50.

ERIC BERNAY'S Music Room
UNION SHOP
133 W. 44th St., N. Y. C. LO 3-4420
Open Evenings Mail orders filled promptly

Sacks Farm
Saugerties, N. Y. Telephone 590J
Unusually beautiful countryside, acres of pine woods. Picturesque hiking trails. Tennis, horseback, swimming, bicycling. Finest home cooking. $18-$20 by the week, $3.25-$3.50 by the day.
Low rates. Open all year.
MAKE EARLY RESERVATIONS

CAMP UNITY
Wingdale, N. Y.

A GAY WAY TO REST and PLAY

Dance to the Music of
SIDNEY BECHET
And his
New Orleans Feetwarmers

Join the lively crew that flocks to Unity for friendly fun . . . Hike through the green Berkshire countryside or swim in the clear refreshing waters of Lake Ellis. Spend a gay holiday with every facility for vacation time pleasure.

Theatricals — Tennis — Boating
Riding — Archery — Ball Games

AMPLE ACCOMMODATIONS
Make reservations in advance if coming Fri. Eve. or Sat.

Rates: $22 week — $3.75 day

For further information write Office, 1 Union Sq., NYC. July Bus Schedule: Cars Leave 2700 Bronx Park East (Allerton Ave. Station, White Plains train IRT) Sun. 10:30 A.M., Mon. thru Thurs. 10:30 A.M. & 6 P.M., Fri. & Sat. 10 A.M., 2:30 & 7 P. M.

CAMP UNITY
WINGDALE, N. Y. :: WINGDALE 2461
N. Y. OFFICE PHONE GR 7-1960

album of the cantata, "I Hear America Singing," performed by John Charles Thomas and the International Ladies Garment Workers Union radio chorus, directed by Simon Rady.

Kleinsinger has good equipment for making music of Whitman; he has a confident major style and no reservations about what Whitman is saying. From well edited fragments of a dozen Whitman poems, Kleinsinger has assembled an important choral work. The music is as generous as Whitman; one is reminded that few contemporary composers have such a style. In the USSR, where there is great activity in choral works, composers handle their material in keeping with the feeling of the period they write about, but this is rare in America. Prokofieff's cantata in *Alexander Nevsky,* which is being performed as a concert piece apart from the film, is one such example of a sophisticated contemporary musician capable of writing truly appropriate music. Benjamin Britten's pallid experimentalism, heard recently at a League of Composers presentation of his new oratorio on Paul Bunyan, is an example of how not to address a major subject.

The recording of the Whitman cantata is an adequate production of the work. Mr. Thomas does remarkably well for a singer heretofore little acquainted with this type of music. He sings it fully and heartily, with clear diction. Understandability is all-important in the new choral school typified by "Ballad for Americans" and Kleinsinger's piece. The words are written to be heard distinctly, every one of them. One should need no libretto to enjoy "I Hear America Singing." The case of the ILGWU chorus is not so favorable. Phonograph recording presents difficulties for massed voices, particularly feminine voices. The radio chorus of thirty people does not come over clearly, although the rest of its musical qualities are splendid. Recording engineers may not be following closely enough the experiences of radio technicians and directors, many of whom have learned to use large choral groups with clarity. Fred Waring, for instance, has been using a large choir with success on the air; his technique should be studied. In the meantime choral recordings should be made with not more than ten good voices. Ten sounds like a hundred on wax.

"I Hear America Singing" sounds like Whitman. That is an achievement for George Kleinsinger and the artists.

JAMES DUGAN.

Blow at Jim Crow

Negroes and whites in Benny Goodman's band.

IT WAS not so much the appearance of Benny Goodman's band recently at New York's Lewisohn Stadium, for jazz has come to the stadium before. Rather it was the fact that for the first time a mixed band of white and Negro instrumentalists sat on the hallowed stand. And this is something for the patrons of our major symphony orchestras to think over, for I know of none which has a Negro member. I recommend this thought also to the policy makers of the major opera companies, who gush over Marian Anderson and "those lovely spirituals," but never dream of offering her a role in an operatic performance.

It is significant that the first break against Jim Crow in a musical organization should come from the popular side of the art, but it should be remembered that such breaks are still exceptional. When Goodman announced that Negro stars would be part of his regular band, there was much head shaking among the "smart boys" in the profession. Equal status in an orchestra means equal pay, which few employers take to kindly. But as Goodman says, "When we go out to play, nobody cares what colors or races are represented just so long as we play good music. That's the way it should be, and I certainly hope that the time will come when a band can play any place, as long as it delivers what the public comes to hear—music."

Goodman here is publicly acknowledging the great debt he owes the Negro people for the creation of the music which gives him so much satisfaction. And certainly the band is improved by the power and drive that "Big Sidney" Catlett contributes with his drumming, the sensitivity of Charlie Christians on the guitar, the inspiration of Cootie Williams on the trumpet. Everybody in the band as a result plays better. "Cootie," whom Goodman proudly introduces as a featured soloist, is unique among trumpeters, expressing that love of the instrument's varied timbres which is so much a part of good jazz. His playing sometimes borders on the grotesque but is never sensational, always full of feeling, always close to the mother language of the blues.

Goodman offered an hour-long panorama of modern, large-band swing music, some excellent, some not so good. The high spots for me were the performance of "One O'Clock Jump," the playing of Ellington's beautifully written "Concerto for Cootie," the closing "jam" version of "Lady Be Good." Unfortunately newspapers have always sensationalized a Goodman concert so that many in the audience try to live up to the advance publicity—I did not mind so much the dancing in the aisles as the clapping, and the fact that the "long-hair" side of the audience began to look upon the affair as a huge joke. They might have emulated the jitter-bug contingent, which listened to the Beethoven "Fifth" with the greatest respect, and enjoyed hugely Goodman's performance of the Mozart "Clarinet Concerto." And a very good performance it was.

I know of no records which do Goodman's new band full justice. However "Pick-a-Rib" (Victor) is a very good example of his clarinet achievements. As for Cootie every collector should have Ellington's "Concerto for Cootie" (Victor) and "Echoes of Harlem," by Cootie Williams and his Rug Cutters (Vocalion).

MARTIN MACK.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

NEW MASSES Classified Ads

50c a line. Payable in Advance. Min. charge $1.50
Approx. 7 words to a line. Deadline Fri. 4 p.m.

FOR RENT

LARGE ROOM, PRIVATE. In modern apartment with couple. **TO RENT, FURNISHED,** $25 per month includes linen, household expenses, telephone. East 8th Street, between 1st and 2nd Avenue. Call GR 7-4036.

COTTAGE. Charming 3 rooms, suitable 4. Swimming, boating, badminton, ping pong. August, September. Beautiful country. Extremely reasonable. Box 1772 NM.

FURS

FURS STYLED TO YOUR PERSONALITY BY ARMAND. Repairing, glazing and remodeling done at moderate rates. Prices are steadily rising—so buy now. ASK FOR MR. ARMAND, 145 W. 30 St., N. Y. C. ARMAND ET SOEUR, CHi 4-1424.

INSURANCE

Whatever your needs — **PAUL CROSBIE,** established since 1908—**FREQUENT SAVINGS,** 42 Broadway. **TRADE UNION AGENCY.** Tel. HAnover 2-3435.

PIANO TUNING

PIANO TUNING, regulating, repairing and voicing. Member Nat'l Ass'n Piano Tuners, Inc. Ralph J. Appleton, 505 Fifth Avenue, Tel. MU rray Hill 2-2291.

VACATION RESORTS

AVANTA FARM, Ulster Park, N. Y. Telephone 591 M 1. Ideal Resting Place. Jewish-American table. Bathing. $14 week, $2.50 day. Children $9.

EAST HILL FARM, Youngsville, N. Y. Breezy vacation spot on the mountain top. Modernized. Colorful bedrooms, rustic dining room. Swimming, tennis, etc. And food! Mmm! $15 week, $2.75 day. Tel. Jeffersonville 78F21. Booklet on request. Managers: Four Young City Slickers.

ELMWOOD FARM invites you to spend your vacation or weekends in the Switzerland of America. Comfortable rooms, excellent food, congenial company. Hiking, bicycling, fishing. **ELMWOOD FARM, HUNTER,** New York.

RIVERSIDE INN, Seymour, Conn., on Lake Housatonic. Swimming, Boating, Tennis. Excellent Food. $18 week. $3.50 day. Rooms for Rent. Phone Derby 598-12.

Modernized old house, fireplace, comfortable beds, delicious food, beautiful mountain country, hour from N. Y., $20 per week. **THE DINNER BELL,** Ethel Breene, Hillcrest Rd. & Emerson Lane, R. F. D. 3, Plainfield, N. J. Plainfield 6-3090.

TANGLEWOOD—For a delightful vacation, weekend. Informal; delicious food; sports; reasonable rates. Woodstock 14 F 13; Tanglewood, Woodstock, N. Y.

$6 weekly. 2 hours work daily. Beautiful farm. Nourishing Food. Workers Rest. Erwinna, Pa. J. Ars prop.

WANTED FOR NEW MASSES

Wanted for NM Fund Drive—Light, small car, good condition, cheap as possible. Call CA 5-3076 (daytime).

CAMPUS AGENTS WANTED by **NEW MASSES.** Enterprising students can earn high commissions through sale of subscriptions and individual copies. For details write: Promotional Director, **NEW MASSES,** 461 Fourth Avenue, New York City.

SALESMEN WANTED TO SELL NEW MASSES on streets. Very high commissions—energetic young men can earn $3 to $5 a day. Apply Promotion Director, New Masses, 461 Fourth Ave., N. Y. C.

NEW MASSES would be grateful for **VOLUNTEER** clerical **HELP** in circulation campaign. Apply Room 1204, 461 Fourth Ave., N. Y. C.

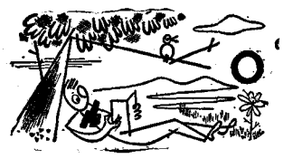
MAY 7, 1940 ISSUE for our own files. Please send to Circulation Department, 461 Fourth Avenue, Room 1204, New York City.

GOINGS ON

MARXIST ANALYSIS OF THE WEEK'S NEWS by Joel Remes, Workers School faculty, Aug. 3, 8:30 P. M. Workers School, 50 E. 13 Street. Admission 25 cents.

One Year of NEW MASSES *plus a timely* BOOK *or a significant* RECORDING

NEW MASSES' regular yearly subscription rate is $5.00



BOOKS

	Our Gift Combination Price
MEN IN BATTLE by Alvah Bessie	$5.25
OVER THE DIVIDE by Victor Yakhontoff	5.25
RESTLESS WAVE by Haru Matsui	5.25
THE FAT YEARS AND THE LEAN by Bruce Minton and John Stuart	6.25
AMBASSADOR DODD'S DIARY	7.00

RECORDINGS

BEHIND BARBED WIRE (Three Records)	6.75
NO FOR AN ANSWER (Five Records)	8.00
SIX SONGS FOR DEMOCRACY (Three Records)	7.00

FILL OUT THIS ORDER NOW:

NEW MASSES, 461 Fourth Ave., New York, N. Y.

Gentlemen:

I wish to take advantage of your combination offer.

Enclosed find $ . . . . . .

The book or recording* I desire is . . . . . .

Please send it to:

Name . . . . . .

Address . . . . . .

City . . . . . .

State . . . . . .

The one-year subscription (or renewal) to NEW MASSES you may send to:

Name . . . . . .

Address . . . . . .

City . . . . . .

State . . . . . .

*(All records mailed postage-collect unless you indicate that you will call for them at the NM office.)

8-5-41

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

NEW MASSES' "SMASH FASCISM DRIVE"

NEW MASSES
461 Fourth Avenue
New York City

Remittance is enclosed for subscription to the weekly NEW MASSES for

☐ One Year at $5.00 ☐ 13 Weeks at $1.00 Introductory offer

Name .....

Street .....

City & State .....

Sent by .....

LOAD THE BLANKS!

NEW MASSES
461 Fourth Avenue
New York City

Remittance is enclosed for subscription to the weekly NEW MASSES for

☐ One Year at $5.00 ☐ 13 Weeks at $1.00 Introductory offer

Name .....

Street .....

City & State .....

Sent by .....

NEW MASSES
461 Fourth Avenue
New York City

Remittance is enclosed for subscription to the weekly NEW MASSES for

☐ One Year at $5.00 ☐ 13 Weeks at $1.00 Introductory offer

Name .....

Street .....

City & State .....

Sent by .....

5,000 New Readers—5,000 Blows Against Hitler

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED